



Training Bulletin

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Third Rail Tester



The MBTA Third Rail Tester is an audible and lighted warning device that alerts firefighters if the third rail is energized or de-energized. The third rail carries 600 volts of direct electrical current. The following instructions should be followed when using the third rail tester.

- **TESTING THE UNIT.** Prior to using the unit, test the device by pressing the test button. The digital display should indicate three (3) zeroes. This indicates that the tester is OK to use. If there is no lighted number indication, the unit is defective and should not be used. The tester should be tested on a weekly basis and prior to activating the unit at an incident.
- **Safety.** When entering onto the right of way, use extreme caution at all times. **DO NOT** step on the third rail or running rails. Step over all rail with caution, keep hands out of pockets and maintain your balance. If firefighters are working in more than one area on the right of way (as at either end of a train) two (2) third rail testers should be used.
- **ACTIVATING THE UNIT.** When in a safe working area, place the tester between the running rails. Holding the paddle by the insulated handle, place the GROUNDING MAGNET on the running rail. Holding the paddle by the insulated handle, place the POSITIVE MAGNET on the third rail.
- **PLACEMENT OF THE PADDLES ON THE RAILS MUST BE DONE IN THE ABOVE MANNER.** IF A PADDLE IS PLACED ON THE THIRD RAIL FIRST, THERE WILL BE 600 VOLTS TRANSFERRED TO THE SECOND PADDLE, PROVIDED THE THIRD RAIL IS ENERGIZED. THIS WILL CREATE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES IF SOMEONE COMES IN CONTACT WITH THAT PADDLE.
- **DETERMINING THIRD RAIL POWER.** When the LED lights are ON and the horn is SOUNDING, the third rail power is **ENERGIZED**. When the LED lights are OFF and the horn is SILENT, the third rail power is **DEAD**.
- **END OF SERVICE.** To remove the magnetized contacts, gently slide them off the appropriate rail. Do not try to yank the magnets loose. To remove the unit from service, hold the insulated handle of the POSITIVE MAGNET and remove it from the third rail. Holding the insulated handle of the GROUNDING MAGNET, remove the second paddle from the running rail.

Standard Operating Guideline (SOG) #5, MBTA Emergencies shall be utilized to manage incidents.

Submit a potential Training Bulletin topic via email to: Training@cambridgefire.org