

IROR Rule 27 – Coupling to Equipment

27.1 Before coupling to equipment at any point, care must be taken to ensure that the equipment is properly secured.

CROR Rule 113.0 – COUPLING TO EQUIPMENT

(a) Before coupling to equipment, precautions must be taken to prevent the equipment from moving unintentionally.

SITUATION: A crew has completed loading a cut of propane cars at a loading rack. All cars are coupled together with two hand brakes applied. The air brakes are applied in emergency, with the brake pistons fully extended. The crew is required to lift the cars from the rack and move them to an outbound track utilizing an engine.

QUESTION: With the air brakes applied in emergency, (brake pistons fully extended), can the hand brakes be released prior to the engine being coupled onto the cut of cars?

ANSWER: No. Equipment must be confirmed to be secure prior to coupling. Unless unintentional movement of the equipment can be prevented with the engine brakes, hand brakes must not be released until the air brake system is sufficiently charged and a sufficient brake pipe reduction made to prevent movement while the hand brakes are released.

INTERPRETATION: Hand brakes can provide far more brake shoe force than air brakes, even with the air brakes applied in emergency. Emergency air brake applications should not be relied upon to hold equipment stationary when not connected to an air source, such as a rail car mover (RCM) or locomotive or when left unattended.

SUMMARY: Hand brakes must be utilized when equipment is being left unattended or when not connected to an air source, such as an RCM or locomotive. Before coupling to any equipment, Switch Crews must ensure that the equipment is properly secured, and the equipment stretched to confirm the coupling has been made.

