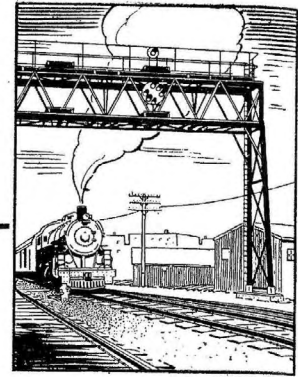


# What's the ANSWER?



## Track Relay Release Time

*"What is your experience as to the maximum time required for a track relay to release by train shunt action? Please explain the resistance and contact capacity of the relay used as well as the length of track circuit, ballast and rail conditions." (Another answer to this question will be found on page 456 of the August issue)*

### 4-Ohm Track Relay

W. F. ZANE

Signal Engineer, C. B. & Q.,  
Chicago

The maximum time for any track relay to release is dependent upon the following conditions: Ballast resistance, rail resistance, length of track circuit, relay energization, train shunt resistance, and the characteristics of the relay. Thus, the question involves so many variable conditions that an authentic statement would have to be based on a given relay under known conditions.

The following data obtained by actual tests will give a picture of results when known conditions are used: The relay is a C. B. & Q., type BL, 4-ohm, high efficiency relay, built in the signal shop to C. B. & Q. specifications. The release time of this relay, set up with an A.A.R. shunt value of 0.06 ohms, is approximately 1.4 seconds with a current flow of 100 milliamperes through relay coils. The operating characteristics of the relay are as follows: Release, 37 milliamperes; pick-up, 69 milliamperes; and working current 71 milliamperes. The relay is equipped with four front carbon to silver contacts and two back contacts, silver to silver. It will be noted that changes in any characteristics would change these figures.

### Results of Actual Tests

J. H. CRAIG  
Atchison, Kan.

The time required for a track relay to release by train shunt action varies with each track circuit. The time of release is governed by the type of relay used, the resistance, contact ca-

capacity, ballast and rail conditions. Timing to a fractional part of a second is difficult under ordinary circumstances; however, if the situation is studied carefully the time required for various track relays to release by train shunt action can be determined.

A 2-ohm track relay with 0.56 volts across the coils and 284 milliamperes flowing through the coils released in slightly less than two seconds by train shunt action. The track circuit was 2770 ft. in length, and ballast and rail conditions were good, 3.5 ohm being the ballast resistance. The relay had a four contact capacity.

A 4-point, 4-ohm track relay with 0.85 volts across the coils and 212 milliamperes flowing through the coils released in approximately  $2\frac{1}{2}$  seconds by train shunt action. The track section was 3900 ft. in length with excellent rail and ballast conditions. The ballast resistance in this case was five ohms.

A six contact capacity 4-ohm relay with 0.9 volts across the coils and 225 milliamperes flowing through the coils released by train shunt action in approximately one second. The track circuit was less than 1000 ft. in length and had an exceptionally low ballast resistance. The short time required to release in this case is due to the weight of the relay. A six point relay is heavier than a four point, and, therefore, will release quicker under the same conditions. The track circuit is short and the voltage is high, comparatively speaking, which is an aid in obtaining a quick release. Low ballast resistance tends to act as a condenser and will tend to keep the relay energized. If it were not for the low ballast resistance in this case the relay would release almost instantly.

A four contact capacity 4-ohm relay operating at the end of a track

circuit less than 1000 ft. in length with very low ballast resistance released by train shunt action in slightly more than two seconds. The relay was operating on 0.51 volts and 128 milliamperes at the coils. The slow time in releasing is due to the low

### To Be Answered in a Later Issue

(1) Under what circumstances can the use of roller bearings under switch points be justified?

(2) What means do you employ to maintain electric locks, line control relays, and signal operating circuits in an energized condition while replacing or renewing a battery?

(3) What are the comparative advantages of using two wires or three wires for line code control circuits on centralized traffic control installations?

(4) For signal power distribution circuits for either a-c. floating or a-c. primary systems, what are the practical limits of voltage and wattage for the power line circuits to be placed on crossarms at normal spacing on pole lines used for telegraph or telephone line circuits?

**If you have a question you would like to have someone answer, or if you can answer any of the questions above, please write to the editor. Answer to any of the questions above will be paid for in cash or by a subscription to Railway Signaling.**

track voltage and the low ballast resistance.

Ballast resistance should be maintained at a maximum in order to insure satisfactory operation of track relays. However, if there are several highway crossings in a track circuit, and if these crossings are wet, the ballast resistance is usually low. The

lower the ballast resistance the higher will be the conductance between the rails, and the greater the loss of battery between the battery and relay end of the track circuit. The higher the ballast resistance and the higher the track voltage the shorter will be the time required for the track relay to release by train shunt action.

## Painting Cable

*"What is a satisfactory and efficient method of painting an extended mileage of aerial cable having a cotton braid covering?" (Other answers to this question were published on page 710 of the December, 1938, issue.)*

### Improved Trough

F. A. TEGELER

Signal Supervisor, C.B. & Q.  
St. Joseph, Mo.

An answer to this question, published in the December, 1938 issue, covers the method as originally employed. The C. B. & Q. relay shop used the F. W. & D. C. maintainer's method and built a practical tube 6 ft. long, with gaskets on each end that could be slipped through 1½ in. cable rings. I used this on my territory in 1937. However, shortly after, I realized that the nature of my territory was such that it was impracticable to walk along beside the cable after the messenger was lowered, as was originally contemplated.

I built a special spearhead shaped guide attached to ¾-in. round poles, coupled together so that they would reach from one telegraph pole to the next, and attached a piece of train signal cord long enough to reach one span. The painter tube was fixed with a shield to the contour of the rings, with a spearhead on the front end so it could be pulled by the bell cord from one pole to the next. The painter tube was also provided with a valve instead of a plug for filling it. The valve is in the rear end, and a vent hole was provided in the front end; the paint was forced in with a small pressure tank, about 2½-gal. capacity.

The work was done as follows: The spearhead was placed around the cable and enough poles coupled on and pushed through to the next telegraph pole. Then the bell cord was fastened on. Afterward, the bell cord was pulled through that span and the painter tube was put on the cable inside the rings and filled with paint from the pressure tank. The painter tube was then pulled through the rings to the next telegraph pole. The man

that pulled it remained on this pole and filled the painter from the pressure tank, brought to him by the first man. The first man then went to the next pole and took off three rings near the pole, pushing the front end of spearhead through to the next pole until he got the bell cord. When the painter was full, he pulled it through. The second man put the three rings on, came down, delivered the pressure

tank as he passed the pole, and went ahead to the next pole, pushing the poles through the span, thus completing the cycle. It is necessary to carry a ladder along to use in cases where the messenger is spliced or grape vines are tangled around the cable, etc. The ladder is always kept with the man in front. Where the messenger is spliced, a few rings must be taken off to let the spearhead and painter pass, as they take up practically all of the available space in the rings. The paint supply was distributed along the track at intervals where the pressure tank needed filling. In this way two men can work to best advantage.

This has worked out very well; however, I found that where the fabric was getting weather worn and frayed on the top of the cable, the painter did not hold enough paint for a span. For this reason, I built a painter using all of the available space, shaped like the rings, six feet long, made of cold rolled steel tubing and sheet metal. By doing this the painter will hold about three pints; this is very important as the cable should have a chance to get thoroughly emersed in the paint so it can soak up all that the fabric will take. I believe this will prove to be as economical as any other method.

## Unusual Signal Trouble

*"What were the circumstances involved in the most unusual signal failure you have encountered, and how did you correct the trouble?"*

### Channel Pins in Insulated Joint

JOHN O'CONNOR

Signal Maintainer, C.M. St. P. & P.  
Madison, Wis.

I had a crossing signal in a small town on a branch line, and while walking down the track toward the crossing one day, I stepped on a switch head rod and at that moment the bell started to ring. When I took my foot off the head rod, the bell stopped.

I tried this several times and the bell would ring every time. At first I thought that the insulated splice on the

head rod was defective, later I traced the trouble to the insulated rail joint on the lead rails of the switch, midway between the frog and the heel of the switch point. I had the section men take the joint apart, and therein we found the cause of the trouble. The bond wire channel pins were still fastened to the web of the rails and when the insulated joint was applied and the bolts tightened, these channel pins stuck through the fiber plates and touched the inside of the angle bars.

At one time these rails were taken from a main line and sent to the rail mill to have the battered ends sawed off. Later they were sent out to this branch line and installed. These channel pins should have been cut off by the signal force before the rails were sent to the rail mill. We cut off the channel pins flush with the web of the rail and applied the insulated rail joint and this corrected the trouble. If the switch point had been making a good contact on the tie plates, the bell would have been ringing continuously.

