



JPB Board of Directors  
Meeting of June 4, 2020

Correspondence as of May 29, 2020

# Subject

1 Train Noise

**From:** Susi Chiang <sc30@live.at>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 26, 2020 4:56 PM  
**To:** Public Comment <PublicComment@samtrans.com>  
**Subject:** Caltrain noise emission San Francisco

Hi,

I am writing to complain about the noises coming from the caltrain station in San Francisco on 4th street. My apartment is facing the station and the noise has become unbearable recently. Right now, 26th May at 4.54PM the engine has been running for more than 30minutes!

I would ask you to investigate the schedule for idle trains.  
Thank you!

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**From:** Tietjen, Brent <TietjenB@samtrans.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 29, 2020 9:18 AM  
**To:** sc30@live.at  
**Cc:** Board (@caltrain.com) <BoardCaltrain@samtrans.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Complaint FW: Caltrain noise emission San Francisco

Hi Susi,

Thanks you for your email. I apologize for the disturbance that you experienced from trains idling at the station on Tuesday afternoon. We have sent this to our operations team for their attention. They have reminded the station crews of the protocols in place to use wayside power whenever possible. Under normal conditions, trains should not be idling longer than an hour prior to departure or an hour after arrival. However, there may be some extraordinary circumstances that may require idling for longer periods of time.

The new operating schedule may be contributing to the increased idling you are experiencing at the station. While the new schedule has reduced the number of trains operating daily, it has increased the layover time of trains at our terminal stations. While we would like to connect to wayside power for every train that comes into the station as soon as possible, there are number of reasons that trains may be left to idle during layovers. The main reason is that each engine must go through a number of tests prior to being placed into service and these tests must start between 45 minutes to an hour prior to revenue service. When a train is laying over between service, the main engine may remain on because of the time and resources it would take to rerun tests before being placed into revenue service. Additional safety systems, namely Positive Train Control, have also increased the number of tests that must be completed prior to service.

Below is a summary of the daily activities that occur at the San Francisco Station each day.

**Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Mandatory Safety Inspection (Daily Inspection) – Once a day**

A variety of interior and exterior inspections of the locomotive and cars are required each calendar day. Inspections take up to two hours and are typically performed after the train has made its last trip. During the first hour, there is an inspection of key functions such as the engine which requires the use of the HEP and Main engines. Repairs are performed during the second hour and require the Main Engine to be in idle.

**Prior to Passenger Service - Throughout the day**

In order to prepare for passenger service, both the Head End Power (HEP) and main engine must be turned on approximately one hour prior to a train's scheduled departure. There are a number of system checks and tests that each train must go through before entering revenue service. These tests must be conducted each time an engine is restarted.

**Passenger Unloading / Cleaning Train – Several times a day**

Once a train arrives at the station, passengers depart and crews clean the interior of the cars. Cleaning and passenger unloading is complete within an one hour. There are additional cleaning requirements due to COVID-19. Typically, both the HEP and Main engines run during passenger unloading and cleaning. Wayside power is used during extraordinary cleaning which may be performed as the consist undergoes Daily Inspection.

**FRA Mandatory Brake Test – Once a day**

Daily brake tests are required by the FRA. Brake tests typically last 30 minutes and are usually performed after the Daily Inspection (listed above). Brake tests require the use of the Main engine, in idle mode. After daily inspection and brake tests are complete, all engines will be turned off.

I hope this helps. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

Best,

**Brent Tietjen, Government and Community Relations Officer**

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