

## SB 19-01

March 8, 2019

L.B. Foster PROTECTOR®  
IV TRACKSIDE FRICTION  
MANAGEMENT SYSTEM  
(P-IV)**Purpose**

*This Safety Bulletin (SB 19-01) provides State Safety Oversight Agencies (SSOAs) and Rail Transit Agencies (RTAs) situational awareness of an identified potential hazard with L.B. Foster PROTECTOR® IV TRACKSIDE FRICTION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (P-IV) units manufactured prior to 2016.*

**Background**

The P-IV unit controls friction to an intermediate level on the railhead in order to reduce rail wear and the onset of corrugations, reduce wheel noise and limit the initiation of rolling contact fatigue and gauge corner cracking. L.B. Foster believes that an accumulation of hydrogen gas from an overcharged battery may have caused incidents where the lids of units separated from their hinges, and in a few cases, were thrown some distance from the tank.

- L.B. Foster has sold approximately 11,000 P-IV units of varying configurations and sizes between 2004 and 2018.
- P-IV unit vents were made part of the design and manufacturing of the units in 2016.
- Over the past 14 years, there have been five confirmed incidents involving P-IV units: (Australia (2014), Japan (2016), Seattle, Sound Transit, USA (2017), Calgary, Canada (2018), and Waterloo, Canada (2018)).
- To L.B. Foster's knowledge, no person has been injured and no property (other than the tank itself) has been damaged in any of the incidents.

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- In L.B. Foster’s view, the issue is most likely to occur, if at all, on the smaller units (e.g., 160# and 200# units).

### Actions Taken

On September 11, 2018, L.B. Foster issued an “Important Product Safety Notice” and “Instructions on Approaching P-IV Units That May Have Hydrogen Accumulation” to all known purchasers of the affected equipment, which are both available on FTA’s website at the link provided under “Additional Resources” listed below.

L.B. Foster also is distributing vent kits that will mitigate or eliminate the potential hazard.

### Next Steps

SSOAs should consider confirming whether the RTAs that are subject to their oversight are utilizing the affected units, and ensuring that the manufacturer’s recommendations or other appropriate mitigations are implemented by the RTA.

Please direct all technical questions regarding this issue to Mr. Patrick Tully, Director, Technical Sales at [PTully@lbfooster.com](mailto:PTully@lbfooster.com).

### Additional Resources

This Safety Bulletin and related documents can be found on the FTA Webpage link below.  
<https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/safety/fta-safety-bulletins>

