

# Quieter brakes for freight trains: Knorr-Bremse expands portfolio

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- Knorr-Bremse extends systems expertise in the field of brake equipment
- For the first time the company is offering volume-produced low-noise brake blocks for new freight cars, securing itself strategic access to the OEM market for quieter brake blocks
- Product certified by the International Union of Railways (UIC)
- First order worth a six-figure euro sum, with delivery to a major rail operator in a German-speaking country commenced in May 2020

Knorr-Bremse, the global market leader for braking and other systems for rail and commercial vehicles, has taken a decisive step in the strategic reinforcement of its brake equipment business.

The company has begun volume-production of its Probloc J816M brake blocks for freight cars. With these 'whisper brakes' Knorr-Bremse will now provide low-noise brake blocks to the OEM freight car market as well. The company had already reinforced its aftermarket business by developing a low-noise, low-friction brake block for fleet modernisation measures.

Dr. Nicolas Lange, Chairman of the Management Board of Knorr-Bremse Rail Vehicle Systems, who is also responsible for the company's activities in Spain, said: "We are pleased to say that with this volume-production brake block for new freight cars we are making a further contribution to much quieter braking in the rail freight sector."

“This product represents a key strategic addition to our portfolio: On the one hand, it provides us with new opportunities to access market share in the OEM sector. And on the other, it cements our position as a system partner and one-stop shop for freight car brake equipment and maintenance.”

Quieter brakes: good news for trackside residents; market access for Knorr-Bremse

As part of the braking system, when the brakes are applied the blocks act directly on the wheels to reduce the speed of the vehicle. With the Problock J816M, Knorr-Bremse is helping to further reduce the noise generated by this process. Made from composite materials, the new brake blocks help to reduce braking noise by up to 10 dB(A) compared to conventional gray cast iron blocks. This means that the noise level is only half as loud to the human ear.

Among those to benefit from these ‘whisper brakes’ are people living in the vicinity of the shunting yards and tracks used by freight trains. Since 2005, new freight cars in the EU have been required to comply with lower noise limits and are fitted with composite brake blocks. Against the backdrop of growing demands for quieter operation in the freight sector, the Problock J816M offers Knorr-Bremse promising opportunities in the marketplace. Delivery of the first consignments to a major operator in a German-speaking country commenced in May 2020, under a supply contract worth a six-figure euro sum.

Knorr-Bremse: full-line supplier of quieter and lighter freight train brake blocks

The fact that Knorr-Bremse has already begun volume production of the Problock J816M is a testament to the organisation’s technological excellence. The company started integrating the underlying manufacturing and process know-how acquired from Federal-Mogul (now DriV) in 2018 and began development and production at its Pamplona plant in Spain. At the same time, Knorr-Bremse also began its application for certification of the brake block by the International Union of Railways (UIC), which has now been granted. Among other things, certification documents the product’s compliance with the high homologation and safety standards in the rail vehicle sector.

In the past, Knorr-Bremse had already developed, brought to market readiness and begun volume production of a low-noise, low-friction brake block generation for the conversion and modernisation of freight cars; known as the ‘LL-block’, this too is UIC-certified. As a result, as a full-line supplier of modern freight car braking systems, Knorr-Bremse today offers its aftermarket customers maximum security of supply.

The volume production of the Problock J816M is the first of further generations of composite brake pads and blocks, the development, refinement and production of which will begin in the course of this year. In the interests of its customers including vehicle manufacturers and operators, Knorr-Bremse aims to build up a complete portfolio of brake blocks and pads for all types of train.

*Photo credit: Knorr-Bremse*