HERITAGE RAILWAY ASSOCIATION

GUIDANCE NOTE

CONTROL OF OPERATIONS

Purpose
This document describes good practice in relation to its subject to be followed by Heritage Railways, Tramways and similar bodies to whom this document applies.

Endorsement
This document has been developed with, and is fully endorsed by, Her Majesty’s Railway Inspectorate, a directorate of the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR).

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Supply
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1. Introduction
This Guidance has been provided to assist the duty holders of heritage railways, tramways and similar bodies in complying with Regulation 6 of the Railways and Other Guided Transport Systems (Safety) Regulations 2006 (ROGS), as amended by the Railways and Other Guided Transport Systems (Safety) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.

Duty holders will be aware that they have a legal obligation to passengers, contractors, other visitors and staff under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act, 1974. It is therefore important that they relate and interpret this part of the Regulations to the safe operation of their railway.

The term ‘man’ or ‘men’ in this Guidance note should be read as applying equally to men and women and ‘he’, ‘him’ and ‘his’ should be similarly interpreted.

The term ‘staff’ in this Guidance Note should be taken to include unpaid volunteer workers as well as paid staff.

The term ‘railway’ should be taken to include heritage tramways and similar bodies where appropriate.

2. Recommendations
This guidance note is issued as recommendations to duty holders with regard to the Control of Operations.

Many railways are already operating systems which are to higher standards than those set out in this guidance note. This highlights the fact that it is the responsibility of duty holders to implement a level of risk assessments and controls which are applicable and necessary relative to the operating conditions on their railway.

Where railways decide to take actions that are not in agreement with these recommendations, following appropriate risk assessments or for other reasons, it is recommended that those decisions are reviewed by the senior management body of the organisation and a formal minute is recorded of both the decision reached and the reasons for reaching it.

3. General
In order to ensure safe and efficient operation of a heritage railway it is important that duty holders designate one person to be in charge of operations during all periods when the railway is operating. An essential part of the role for this designated person is to take overall initial charge in cases of accidents and emergencies and when degraded operation applies.

The arrangements for the "Control of Operations" should be specified in the duty holder’s Safety Management System (SMS).

4. Job Titles
Titles for such a person can vary from railway to railway, but for the purposes of this Guidance Note it includes the following:

- Controller
- Line Controller
- Responsible Officer
- Duty Manager
- Operations Manager
- Duty Officer

This list is not exhaustive – there may well be others but the important point is that the person occupying this position is known to be in charge of operations.

To avoid confusion of roles, it is recommended that any use of these terms for a role other than that described in this Guidance Note is discontinued.

In order to avoid duplication, the term “Controller” will be used throughout this Guidance Note.

The role of Controller is a SAFETY CRITICAL function.
5. Selection and Appointment

Persons appointed to the position of Controller should ideally have a record of responsibility in one or more key operating roles such as driver, guard, signalman or stationmaster.

The duty holder should have a suitable programme in place for the selection and training of Controllers.

The Controller should be appointed before the day or event

The name of the Controller and how to contact him must be made known to all rostered staff.

The Controller should be physically present at the railway and contactable by telephone.

6. Area of Responsibility

This can vary depending upon the complexity of the railway operation and the frequency of train services. It may be summarised as one of two options below:

Operational Responsibility Only

On larger railways there may well be Departmental Managers (Shop, Catering and Workshop) who are responsible for all activities in their respective departments. However it is important that in the case of an accident, or degraded operations, or any other emergency, the Controller establishes a liaison with these departmental managers in order to seek assistance (especially workshop and catering) when required.

Overall Responsibility for all Activities

On a smaller railway with limited staff the duty holder may decide that the Controller takes responsibility for all activities on the railway.

7. Authority

Differing instructions from different persons can cause confusion and can be potentially dangerous. In order to avoid any confusion it is important that the authority of the Controller is ABSOLUTELY FINAL. If a change of circumstances or higher management require a change to a previous instruction this should ONLY be communicated through the Controller.

8. Location

Three options are available and it is for the duty holder to decide which one is best suited to their individual requirements. They are:

Static

The Controller is located in a specific place known perhaps as “Control” or Operations Room which is located at a convenient point on the railway. If part of the Controller’s duties is to keep a record of train movements (e.g. train graph) then such a facility is clearly of advantage and is also helpful for contact with and giving access instructions to the emergency services in cases of an incident. All relevant documentation can also be more readily available.

Mobile

In this case the Controller can move around the railway as he wishes; this has the advantage of him being seen and also observing matters which may need attention. Clearly in this case there is a need for the Controller to have both appropriate transport and reliable means of communication (radio or mobile phone). It is also essential that he keeps key members of staff aware of his planned movements and whereabouts.

Third Option

This is for the Controller to be mobile but to have access to a dedicated desk or office area (suitably equipped with telephones) to where he can be located if circumstances require.
9. Essential Knowledge

Controllers should have a working knowledge of the railway operating procedures and locomotives and rolling stock. This knowledge should include:

- The contents of the railway’s Safety Management System.
- The Operating Rule Book and Supplementary Operating Instructions.
- Timetable, Working Timetable and Special Traffic Notices
- Train Signalling Regulations.
- Line knowledge – track layout, capacity of loops, gradients, any restrictions relating to sidings, and any areas where restricted clearances exist.
- Load limits for each locomotive.
- Speed restrictions – permanent and temporary.
- Emergency and Incident Plans, including contact details for the emergency services control room(s).
- Procedure for the Reporting of Accidents or reportable incidents to RAIB and/or ORR.
- Procedures for the testing for Drugs and Alcohol in the event of an accident or incident.
- Information on any current engineering work.
- Any restrictions which apply to rostered staff (e.g., work in daylight only)

10. Summary of Duties

These can vary (see Item 6 above), but the following is a summary of the principal duties for which a Controller might be responsible:

- Ensuring that all essential operating duties are covered by rostered staff and ensuring that alternative arrangements are made as necessary.
- Checking that signal boxes and stations are opened (and closed) at the appropriate time.
- Checking that rostered locomotives are available at the scheduled time. (Good liaison with the Locomotive Superintendent or Running Foreman is an essential part of the duty).

(NB: A daily “tick box” check list is useful for all three of the above).

- General supervision of the operation of the railway including effective communications.
- Arranging and managing any unscheduled movement, such as engineering trains or relief/special passenger trains. (NB: The duty holder should define the circumstances and authority whereby Controllers may initiate the operation of extra passenger trains not scheduled in the Working Timetable or Special Traffic Notice).
- Advising station and other customer facing staff details of any delays or other variations in the published plan and timetable.
- The initiation of procedures to deal with accidents and emergencies.
- Managing operations when a degraded operational situation applies, including restoring normal working as soon as practicable.
- Monitoring passenger flows in relation to capacity of trains - especially in relation to group bookings.
- Monitoring and managing essential connections with public transport.
• Assessment of possible risk of fire (line side and adjoining property) and issuing warnings to train crews as necessary in periods of very dry conditions. Consider motive power situation with a view to replacing steam with diesel (locomotives or railcars) or coal fired engines by oil burning ones, assuming such resources are available.

• Monitoring weather forecasts for possible inclement weather conditions which may affect operations.

• Monitoring of Lone Workers. The Controller should arrange for the location of any such lone workers to be advised to train crews. Arrangements should be in place for lone workers who may be on or about the track to advise the Controller:
  o When they commence and finish work;
  o The location in which they will be working;
  o The type of work involved; and
  o If they move from one point to another.

NB: If circumstances are such that the Controller finds that he has become or is likely to become a Lone Worker for any length of time he should take steps to ensure that another competent person is aware of the situation

If required by the Safety Management System or other defined procedures, he should:
• Keep a record of train movements (train graph or log book).
• Complete daily mileage records for locomotives and passenger vehicles.
• Check security arrangements for closing of ticket offices.

Finally at the end of the duty he should complete the Daily Log Book and provide written reports as necessary and required.

11. Interworking with the National Network
Controllers on railways that inter-work trains from and to the national network need to know the procedures that govern such operations, contact arrangements with the infrastructure controller and train operating company(s) both for routine communications and for the reporting of delays to trains, accidents and incidents to trains and/or personnel.

12. Operations after dark (or in conditions of reduced visibility such as fog or falling snow)
Where operations have to take place after dark or in conditions of reduced visibility the Controller should ensure that adequate arrangements are in place for the continued safe operation of the railway.

13. Delegation of Responsibilities
It is established practice on some heritage railways for some degree of operational control to be delegated as noted below. Duty holders should consider and decide what might be appropriate for each individual operation.

Signalmen
In cases of late running or degraded operation Signalmen may confer and agree revised train running arrangements in order to resume normal working as soon as practicable with the Controller being kept informed. The SMS should clearly state the extent of the authority of Signalmen in such matters.

14. Assistance for a Controller
When a Controller is dealing with an incident, an emergency or degraded operation he should consider obtaining a competent person to assist by dealing with telephone calls, recording messages and keeping a record or log book detailing action and times etc.
15. Application to Smaller Railways

Smaller heritage railways with less intensive operations may not have the resources to implement all of this guidance. Where operations are simple, generally where only one locomotive or train is in operation on the whole system (including sidings), then the function of Controller may well be covered by a competent person who can also perform other work on the railway provided that:

1. He has adequate means of both internal and external communication readily available.
2. In the case of an accident or other emergency he can leave any other work in order to concentrate on the emergency situation.
3. Such persons do NOT include a member of the crew of an operating locomotive, train guard or signalman.
4. The arrangement is subject to a Risk Assessment at not more than five yearly intervals.

16. References


   RSP 001 Developing and Maintaining Staff Competence
   RSP 003 Safe Movement of Trains
   RSP 004 Safety Critical Tasks

HRA Guidance Notes (available on the HRA website):

   HGA S0003 Safety Management System.

Information on LONE WORKERS is contained in HSE publication Ref INDG 73 (Rev 2) entitled “WORKING ALONE” which is available on the HSE website - <www.hse.gov.uk>