RAIL SAFETY AND STANDARDS BOARD

Rule Book Module SS2
GERT8000-SS2
Issue 7 | December 2024

Shunting

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Conventions used in the Rule Book

	Example
A black line in the margin indicates a change to that rule since the last printed version. The Rule Book Briefing Leaflet in the online Standards Catalogue contains more information about the changes.	▌
Green text in the margin indicates who is responsible for carrying out the rule.	driver
A white **i** in a blue box indicates that there is information provided at the bottom of the page.	ℹ
A rule printed inside a red box is considered to be critical and is therefore emphasised in this way.	

If you do not understand anything in the Rule Book, ask your manager or supervisor to explain it to you.

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You will need this module if you carry out the duties of a:

- driver
- shunter
- signaller.

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1 Definitions

Loose shunting

Shunting of vehicles that do not remain attached to the traction unit during the movement.

Points worked from a signal box

For the purpose of this module this includes points worked from a ground frame.

Propelling

Pushing vehicles by a traction unit. This does not include push-pull trains.

Shunter

The person in control of a specific shunting movement.

Shunting movement

Any movement of a train or vehicle other than a train passing normally along a running line.

Signaller

For the purpose of this module this includes a ground frame operator.

Unaccompanied driver

For the purpose of this module, a driver carrying out a shunting movement without an accompanying shunter.

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2 Prohibitions and restrictions

The people responsible: ***driver, shunter***

2.1 Using a traction unit

driver, shunter

Unless authorised in section 2.2, you must start a shunting movement with a traction unit.

2.2 Moving vehicles using a chain, a rope or pushing with a road vehicle

driver, shunter

You may only move vehicles using a chain or rope, or by pushing with a road vehicle, where it has been specially authorised in local instructions.

You must never move vehicles using a prop or pole against a locomotive or any rail or road vehicle.

2.3 Loose shunting

driver, shunter

You may carry out loose shunting only where specially authorised in local instructions.

You must not loose shunt coaching stock vehicles.

You must not loose shunt other vehicles against coaching stock vehicles.

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3 Shunter's personal safety

The person responsible: ***shunter***

3.1 Riding on the step of a locomotive or vehicle

You must not ride on the step of a locomotive or vehicle. **shunter**

If one is provided, you may ride on the special platform on a shunting locomotive.

3.2 Coupling or uncoupling

shunter

You must never go between vehicles unless you are sure they will not move.

If you have to go between vehicles, you must:

- wait until the vehicles have stopped completely
- display a hand danger signal to the driver or instruct the driver not to move.

You must never remain between vehicles during an ease-up movement.

If you have to go between vehicles to deal with automatic couplers, you must first stop the vehicles at least 2 metres (6 feet 6 inches) apart.

If there is any possibility that other vehicles might be shunted against those you are going to work between, you must instruct the other shunters not to make any movements towards them.

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shunter

If you have to go between vehicles to couple or uncouple multiple units, you must:

- make sure the driver is present
- reach a clear understanding with the driver as to what is to be done.

3.3 Dealing with the automatic brake

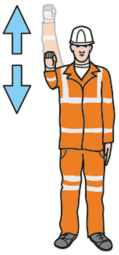
shunter

When going between vehicles to uncouple, you must disconnect the brake pipes before any other connections.

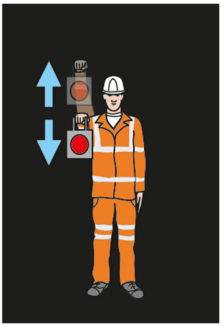
When dealing with the other connections (including the automatic couplers), you must prevent any movement of the vehicles by leaving the air-brake pipe cocks open.

When going between vehicles to couple, you must connect the brake pipes after any other connections.

You must use the handsignals shown in diagram SS2.1 to tell the driver to create brake-pipe pressure.



Handsignal during daylight
Diagram SS2.1
Create brake-pipe pressure



Handsignal during darkness

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3.4 Dealing with the electrical train supply (ETS) connections

shunter

You must make sure the ETS is switched off or the shore supply is disconnected before:

- opening the dust caps on cable sockets
- coupling or uncoupling the ETS.

If you can safely reach the connections from alongside the vehicles, you may couple or uncouple them before dealing with the brake pipes.

When coupling or uncoupling the connections, you must make sure:

- the cables do not trail on the ground
- you take special care if there is conductor rail equipment.

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4 Precautions before shunting

The people responsible: ***driver, shunter***

4.1 Reaching a clear understanding

driver, shunter

Before starting any shunting, you must reach a clear understanding with each other about:

- what exactly needs to be done
- how the shunting movements will be controlled.

4.2 Safety checks before making any movement

shunter, unaccompanied driver

You must make sure that:

- the vehicles can be moved safely
- no NOT TO BE MOVED boards are placed on the vehicles
- other vehicles are not foul of the movement to be made
- any road vehicle or equipment is clear
- anyone who could be put in danger is warned to move to a safe position
- anyone who is working on the outside of vehicles on an adjacent line is warned to keep clear
- any derailer or scotch block has been removed.

Except where it is specifically authorised in local instructions that trailing hand points are suitable to be pushed through, you must check that all points the movement will go over are correctly set for the movement.

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5 Safeguards while shunting

The people responsible: ***driver, shunter***

5.1 General

You must work only to the shunter's instructions. **driver**

You must only make a movement, even when a signal has been cleared, if the shunter has:

- authorised the movement, or
- operated a shunting or other indicator which authorises the movement.

Except where specifically authorised, you must not:

- pass a signal at danger, a block marker or shunt marker when making a movement
- exceed 5 mph (10 km/h) in a siding.

Unless specifically authorised, you must not allow a shunting movement to pass a signal at danger, a block marker or shunt marker without authority. **shunter**

5.2 Controlling movements

a) By handsignals

You must use the handsignals shown in diagram SS2.2 on page 12 and diagram SS2.3 on page 13 to control a movement. **shunter**

You must make sure the driver can see your handsignals at all times.

You must make sure no other driver acts on your handsignals.

You must work only to the handsignals shown in diagram SS2.2 on page 12 and diagram SS2.3 on page 13. **driver**

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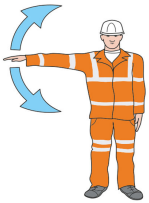
Move away from the shunter

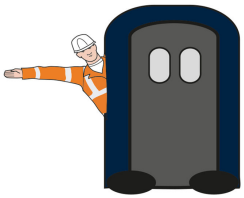
Move towards the shunter



Slow down

Stop immediately

Ease up



Stop immediately when on a vehicle

Diagram SS2.2

Handsignals during daylight

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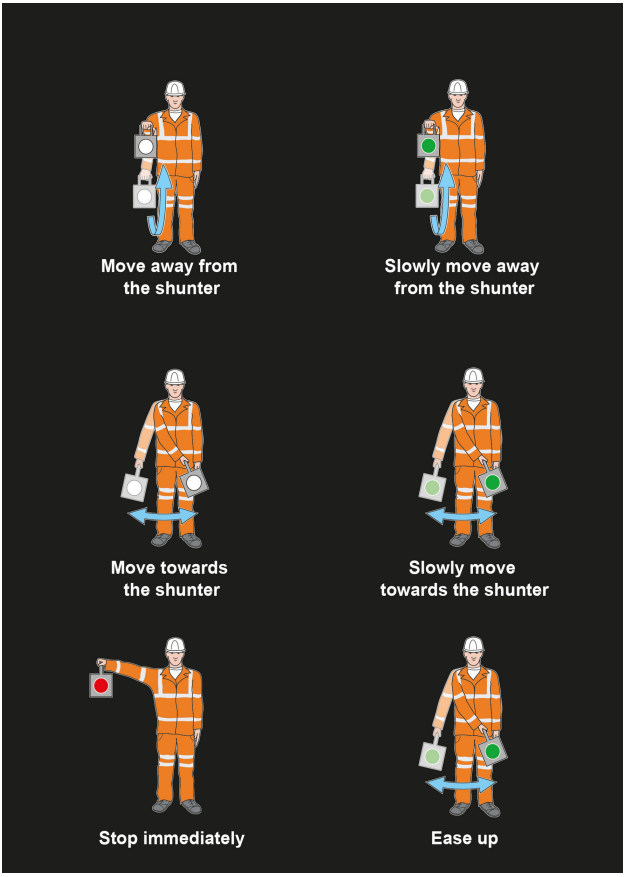

Diagram SS2.3

Handsignals during darkness

You must not start or continue with a movement unless: **driver**

- you clearly understand the shunter's handsignal
- you are sure that the handsignal applies to you.

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driver

You must:

- stop the movement immediately if you lose sight of the shunter or the shunter's handsignals
- restart only when the shunter has given you the correct handsignal.

b) By radio

shunter

You must:

- clearly identify the correct train and driver
- speak continuously or transmit a continuous bleep signal throughout each movement
- instruct the driver to stop immediately if you notice the transmission is failing.

driver

If there is a break in transmission, you must stop immediately and restart only when the shunter tells you.

5.3 Controlling movements not driven from a cab at the leading end of the movement

a) General

shunter

When a traction unit making a propelling movement or shunting movement is not being driven from a cab at the leading end of the movement, you must:

- ride in the leading cab, if this is at the leading end of the movement, or
- ride in the vehicle at the leading end of the movement, if this is suitable, from which you can control the movement and apply the automatic brake, or
- control the movement from a safe place on the ground, ahead of the movement, where you are in contact with the driver or where the driver can see you.

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During the movement, you must: **shunter**

- keep a good lookout
- obey all signals unless you are specifically authorised to pass a signal at danger
- not pass a block marker or shunt entry board without authority
- warn anyone on or near the line about the approaching movement
- if anyone on or near the line appears to be in danger, stop the movement.

You must control the movement so that it is made at a safe speed which will allow you to instruct the driver to stop the movement within the distance that you can see the line is clear.

b) Riding in the leading cab or at the leading end

If you are riding in the leading cab or at the leading end of the movement, you must signal to the driver as necessary by: **shunter**

- using the bell or buzzer code
- cab-to-cab telephone
- driver-guard communication equipment
- radio
- handsignal.

You must use the warning horn or a portable horn as necessary.

In an emergency you must stop the movement by using the automatic brake.

c) Movements over level crossings

You must make sure you have a clear view of the crossing and if provided, you know how to operate the plunger, if it is necessary to make a propelling movement over:

- an automatic barrier crossing locally monitored (ABCL)
- an automatic open crossing locally monitored (AOCL)
- an open crossing (OC).

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5.4 After each movement

shunter, unaccompanied driver

After each movement, you must make sure vehicles are secured, where necessary, by handbrakes.

You must scotch vehicles which have no handbrake or on which the handbrake is not working. You do not have to do this if the vehicle is attached to other vehicles:

- on which handbrakes can be applied
- which are capable of holding the unbraked vehicle.

shunter, unaccompanied driver

If you are shunting vehicles against stationary vehicles, you must secure any vehicles which are to remain at a stand before you make a draw-away movement.

You must not rely on the automatic brake to secure any vehicle.

5.5 Shunting beyond a limit of shunt signal or indicator

shunter, unaccompanied driver

You must make sure no part of the movement passes a limit of shunt signal or indicator unless the signaller has given permission.

5.6 Shunting beyond a home signal

shunter, unaccompanied driver

You must not allow a wrong-direction shunting movement to go beyond a home signal unless the signaller has given permission.

If there is a falling gradient towards the next signal box, you must not make the movement unless:

- the automatic brake is working throughout the train, or
- the locomotive is at the end nearer to the next signal box.

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5.7 Entering a shed or building

shunter, unaccompanied driver

Before you allow a movement to enter a shed or building, you must:

- stop the movement at the entrance
- proceed only when you have checked it is safe to do so
- sound a short blast of the horn using the soft setting or depot whistle if available as a warning of the movement before restarting, unless otherwise authorised in your company instructions.

5.8 Operating ground frames

shunter, unaccompanied driver

Before operating a ground frame which controls movements to a siding, you must reach a clear understanding with the signaller about:

- the movements required
- whether the train will be shut in the siding.

If you shut the train in the siding, you must confirm to the signaller that the train is clear of the running line before you restore the ground frame to normal.

shunter

If a ground frame on a single-line section is to be unlocked by a train staff or token for shunting purposes, you must:

- get the train staff or token from the driver
- when shunting is completed, lock the points in the correct position for trains to pass on the running line
- return the train staff or token to the driver.

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6 Driving a traction unit from the leading cab

The person responsible: ***driver***

driver

You must always drive a light locomotive (single or in multiple), on-track machine, multiple-unit or push-pull train from the leading cab when a shunting movement is:

- within a depot or stabling siding
- entering a shed or building
- proceeding onto vehicles
- approaching buffer stops.

However, you can drive from another cab, as long as a shunter is controlling the movement by radio, and it is not necessary for you to observe signals or handsignals.

You must drive from the leading cab whenever possible when making any other shunting movement. If you cannot do so, you may drive from another cab, providing a shunter can control the movement, as shown in section 5.3 of this module.

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7 Attaching and detaching vehicles

The people responsible: ***driver, shunter***

7.1 Passenger and postal trains

You must make sure the automatic brake is in use on movements which involve attaching to or detaching from a passenger or postal train. **driver**

7.2 Attaching a traction unit to a train or vehicles

You must: **driver**

- always stop the traction unit 2 metres (6 feet 6 inches) from the vehicle
- stop again at any distance set out in the instructions for the class of traction unit involved
- if the movement is being controlled by a shunter, move forward only when authorised by the shunter.

7.3 Detaching a traction unit or vehicle from a train

Before detaching a traction unit, you must secure the train. If the train is on a gradient, you must secure it at the lower end. **shunter**

Before detaching a vehicle from a train, you must secure the vehicle.

You must not rely on the automatic brake to secure the train or vehicle.

Before a dead traction unit is detached from a train, you must make sure it is properly secured. **driver**

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7.4 Detaching traction units that are coupled together on a running line

driver

You must not uncouple a traction unit from another traction unit on a running line except:

- at a signal box
- at a signal
- on a platform line.

Before uncoupling traction units at a location where this does not happen routinely, you must tell the signaller what movements need to be made.

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8 Movements over points worked from a signal box

The people responsible: ***driver, shunter, signaller***

8.1 Getting the signaller's permission

Before authorising a movement over points worked from a signal box, you must:

shunter, unaccompanied driver

- get the signaller's permission either verbally or by a handsignal as described in section 8.2
- check the points are fitting correctly, where possible.

8.2 Signaller giving permission

You must give the shunter or driver permission by speaking directly to the shunter or driver, where appropriate, or by these handsignals.

signaller

- During daylight - arm raised above the head.
- During darkness - white light twisted quickly.

8.3 When the signaller's permission is not needed

You do not need the signaller's permission if either of the following apply.

shunter, unaccompanied driver

- The signaller has cleared a signal for the movement.
- The movement will pass a shunting or position-light signal which has a yellow 'stop' indication, and the points are set for a route to which the signal does not apply when it is cleared.

Before moving these points, you must check that no shunting movement will be affected.

signaller

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8.4 When the movement is clear of points

shunter, unaccompanied driver

If you need to indicate to the signaller that a movement is clear of points that need to be moved, you must do so as follows.

Shunter

During daylight - arm raised above the head.

During darkness - white light twisted quickly.

Unaccompanied driver

During daylight or darkness - one short blast on the horn.

signaller

You must not move the points concerned after a movement has been made until the shunter or driver has given you the correct hand or audible signal.

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9 When shunting is completed

The people responsible: ***driver, shunter, signaller***

9.1 Leaving vehicles in a safe position

You must make sure that vehicles are: **shunter, unaccompanied driver**

- not left on a running line, except as shown in section 9.3
- not fouling any other line
- clear of any points which need to be moved
- left within the protection of any trap points, derailers or scotch blocks.

You must also make sure that there is enough room at fouling points for anyone to pass safely between:

- the vehicles which are to be left
- any movement on the adjoining line or siding.

9.2 Securing vehicles and traction units

You must make sure that vehicles are properly secured to prevent them moving. **shunter**

You must make sure that traction units are properly secured to prevent them moving. **driver**

9.3 Leaving vehicles or traction units on a running line

When leaving vehicles on a running line, you must: **shunter**

- first tell the signaller, unless the method of working is routine at that location or for that movement
- place a red light on the rear end of the vehicles, or on both ends when on a single or bi-directional line.

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driver

When leaving traction units on a running line, you must:

- first tell the signaller, unless the method of working is routine at that location or for that movement
- place a red light on the rear end of the traction units, or on both ends when on a single or bi-directional line.

9.4 Leaving vehicles or traction units on a dead-end line

shunter

When leaving vehicles on a dead-end line which has a red or white light on the buffer stops, you must make sure a light of the same colour is placed on the end of the vehicles which faces approaching movements.

driver

When leaving a traction unit on a dead-end line which has a red or white light on the buffer stops, you must make sure a light of the same colour is placed on the end of the traction unit which faces approaching movements.

driver, shunter

You do not have to place a light on the end of the vehicle or traction unit if your train operating company instructions say that this is not necessary at that location because it will be sufficiently visible to an approaching movement.

9.5 Protecting running lines

shunter

To protect running lines, you must make sure that:

- ground-frame operated points and derailers are left in the normal position
- scotch blocks, where provided, are placed across the rails.

9.6 Checking that all running lines are clear

signaller

If necessary, you must ask the shunter or driver to confirm that all running lines are clear.

10 Additional instructions for shunting within a possession

The people responsible: ***driver, shunter***

10.1 Headlight on propelling movements

If there is no fixed headlight on the leading vehicle of a propelling movement, you must place a portable headlight on the leading vehicle before the movement starts. **shunter**

10.2 Before giving a signal to move

Before giving the driver a signal to move, you must make sure that the driver has been given authority to make the movement from: **shunter**

- the person in charge of the possession (PICOP), or
- the engineering supervisor (ES) if within a work site.

10.3 Propelling outside a work site

You must not make propelling movements outside a work site unless the details have been published in the *Weekly Operating Notice* or *Engineering Notice*. **driver, shunter**

If it is necessary to propel outside a work site when details have not been published, you must ask the PICOP if permission to propel has been given by Operations Control. **shunter**

Before a movement begins, you must sound a warning by horn or whistle.

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11 Loading and unloading rail vehicles during engineering work

The people responsible: ***driver, shunter***

11.1 Agreeing the requirements

driver, shunter

You must come to a clear understanding with the person in charge who is appointed for the safe loading or unloading of moving or stationary vehicles:

- when the person in charge will take over control of movements
- how the movement will be controlled
- when the control of movements will be handed back to the driver or shunter.

11.2 During the movement

driver

You must carry out the instructions given by the person in charge.

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