

Rule Book Module G1
GERT8000-G1
Issue 10 | December 2025

General safety responsibilities and personal track safety for non-track workers

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Conventions used in the Rule Book

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.

A white i in a blue box indicates that there is information provided at the bottom of the page.

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.

Example



driver



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Contents approved by Traffic Operation and Management Standards Committee.

For information regarding the Rule Book, contact:

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

- a train driver
- a guard
- a shunter
- a designated person (DP)
- a signaller
- a crossing keeper
- platform staff.

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Fundamental operating principles

1

General instructions

The people responsible: all concerned

1.1 Rules, regulations and instructions

all
concerned

Rules, regulations and instructions apply to the task being carried out and to those carrying out the task, no matter what grade or job title they have.

Unless you are being instructed by a competent person, you must be competent to correctly apply the rules, regulations and instructions to the tasks you are authorised to carry out.

Safety must always be your first concern. If there is no rule that allows or prevents you doing something you believe must be done, you must do it in the safest way you know taking into account your training and experience.

If there is a need to adopt an alternative rule or arrangement to the ones set out in the Rule Book, you must take into account:

- any recognised decision-making tool which your employer has told you about
- the situation in which the rule is being applied
- the immediate and wider system risks imported and managed by the existing rule and the alternative.

1.2 Getting on and off rail vehicles

You must not:

- get off a moving rail vehicle unless it is designed for continuous slow-speed movement such as the high-output ballast cleaner
- get on a moving rail vehicle unless it is absolutely necessary, and then only if you can do so safely
- ride on the steps of a locomotive or vehicle
- ride on a hand trolley or any other vehicle not designed for this purpose.

all
concerned

1.3 Mechanical and electrical plant or other equipment

You must not operate mechanical or electrical plant or any other equipment unless you have been trained and are authorised to do so. If necessary, you must also hold a certificate of competency in operating the plant or equipment.

all
concerned

1.4 Travelling in driving cabs

You must only travel in the driving cab of a train if this is in connection with your duties shown in the Rule Book or you have authority to do so.

all
concerned

all
concerned

If you are in possession of a cab pass, you must:

- show your cab pass to the driver before entering the cab
- show the driver any necessary permission issued by the train operator when asking for access to the cab of a train carrying high consequence dangerous goods
- tell the driver the reason for travelling in the cab and where you plan to travel to
- arrange for the train to be stopped specially if necessary
- check you have any personal protective equipment your company policy requires if you plan to leave the train somewhere other than a station platform
- check with the driver if any mobile electronic devices are to be switched off before entering the cab.

When travelling in the driving cab, you must not distract the driver.

1.5 User-worked level crossings, other gates and lineside fences

a) User-worked level crossings

all
concerned

You must lower or close barriers or gates at user-worked level crossings and report to the signaller or Operations Control if you see any barriers or gates that have been left open or not lowered properly.

b) Other gates and lineside fences

You must keep closed any other gates giving access to the railway and if you can, lock them to prevent people from trespassing and causing vandalism.

If you come across a damaged fence, you must secure it if you can, and report any defects to the signaller or Operations Control.

1.6 Reporting lineside fires

You must immediately report a lineside fire to the signaller or Operations Control.

all
concerned

1.7 Reporting trespassers

You must report anyone you believe to be trespassing to the signaller or Operations Control.

all
concerned

1.8 Flowing or pooling water that might affect structures or earthworks

You must immediately tell the signaller or Operations Control if any flowing or pooling water might affect structures or earthworks.

Examples of such water include:

- water rising up from the track or the cess
- unusual amounts of water pooling next to the track or in the cess
- water flowing down or pouring out of the sides of embankments or cuttings.

all
concerned

You must tell the signaller or Operations Control if the water appears to be displacing any material.

1.9 Defective rail vehicles

You must not remove or obscure a NOT TO GO or other repair label on a defective rail vehicle unless you are authorised to do so.

all
concerned

1.10 Overhead power lines belonging to an electricity company collapsing

If an overhead electric power line belonging to an electricity company falls onto or near the railway line, all affected lines must be protected. If necessary, you must carry out the instructions shown in section 3 of this module.

all
concerned

It is controlled when printed

Supersedes previous versions of this document from 06/09/2025

Work will be in force on 06/12/2025

**all
concerned**

You must not go closer than 5 metres (approximately 5 yards) to the fallen power line or anything in contact with it, until it has been confirmed by the electricity company that it is safe to do so.

1.11 Detonators

**all
concerned**

If you have placed detonators on the line and you expect a train to pass over them, you must:

- stand at least 30 metres (approximately 30 yards) away from the detonators
- tell anyone else standing close by to also keep this distance away
- as the train passes over them, turn away.

If you have placed detonators on the line and you do not expect a train to pass over them, you can stay at the detonators if the rules require this.

2

Danger to trains

The people responsible: all concerned

Whenever you can, you must check a moving train for anything that looks unsafe such as:

- a door not closed properly
- an insecure load
- a vehicle on fire
- a hot axle box
- the headlight not lit
- the tail lamp missing or not lit
- the driver sounding the train in distress warning (which is a continuous series of long blasts on the high/loud tone of the horn)
- the driver or guard displaying a red handsignal
- the hazard warning indicator (flashing headlights).

If you become aware of any of these hazards or warnings or other dangers, you must immediately tell the signaller, or if this is not possible, the person in charge.

**all
concerned**

3 Stopping a train in an emergency

The people responsible: all concerned

all
concerned

The following hazards might put approaching trains in danger.

- A track defect.
- A flood.
- An obstruction.
- A fire.
- Damage to structures or earthworks above or below the line.
- Any light which is out at an emergency indicator.
- A cow, bull or other large animal within the boundary fence (even if it is not an immediate danger to trains).
- Any other animals on or near the line.

If you become aware of any of these hazards or other dangers, you must immediately tell the signaller. If this is not possible, you must tell the person in charge (who must tell the signaller).

As well as reporting the hazard, you must take any other necessary action, such as:

- stopping trains
- calling the emergency services.

If you have to stop a train in an emergency, you must show a hand danger signal clearly to the driver using one of the following methods.

During daylight

You must show a red flag. If you do not have a red flag, raise both arms above your head. If you are riding on a vehicle, raise one arm held out horizontally.

During darkness or in poor visibility

You must show a red light to the driver or wave any light violently.

4 Accidents

The people responsible: all concerned

4.1 Reporting an accident

You must report an accident as quickly as possible to the signaller or Operations Control.

all
concerned

When reporting an accident, you must first say '**This is an emergency call**'. This is important, as you will get the immediate attention of the person you are speaking to. You must then state:

- your name
- your job title
- your employer
- where you are speaking from
- your telephone or radio call number.

You must give the exact location and details of the accident including which lines:

- are definitely blocked, and
- those lines you think could be blocked.

You must also say which emergency services are needed.

You must report all accidents, including near misses, to your supervisor or manager.

A rail incident officer (if appointed) will take charge at a scene of an accident.

4.2 Calling the emergency services

all
concerned

You must make sure you know how to call the emergency services from your usual place of work. From most railway locations you should call 999.

You must use a fixed railway telephone if one is available (this helps the emergency services to locate where you are calling from).

If no fixed railway telephone is available, you may use a mobile or non-railway telephone.

In all cases, when calling the emergency services, you must:

- give the exact location of the accident
- give details of the accident.

4.3 Preserving evidence at a serious accident

all
concerned

Accident investigators will need to examine the site for evidence of the cause of the accident. You must not interfere with, disturb or remove any evidence of the possible cause of the accident except to help the injured or to prevent further injury or damage. This applies to equipment such as:

- driving controls
- signalling equipment
- rolling stock
- lineside equipment.

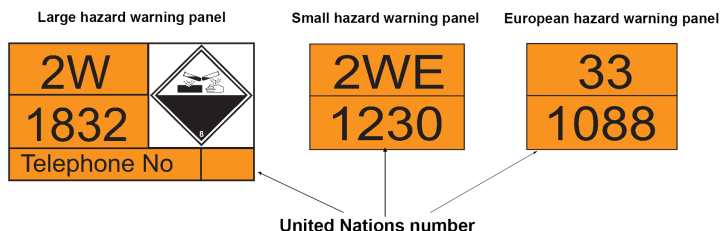
4.4 Reporting a dangerous goods incident

If you see something wrong with a train carrying dangerous goods, you must tell the signaller, Operations Control or the local manager **'This is a rail dangerous goods emergency'** and give the following information (as well as the information set out in section 4.1).

all
concerned

United Nations number - this is displayed on the hazard warning panel on the side of a vehicle (or container).

A hazard warning panel will look like one of these:



You must:

- keep well clear
- keep the wind behind you as you face any affected vehicles or packages
- avoid low-lying places where gas may gather
- keep unauthorised people well clear
- try to put out any fire, without putting yourself or anyone else at risk
- keep naked lights and lamps well clear
- not smoke, use matches or pocket lighters
- not use a mobile phone near any vehicle carrying flammable loads.

**all
concerned**

If you are contaminated by dangerous goods you must:

- if your eyes are affected, wash them with plenty of cold water
- take off all contaminated clothing, trying to avoid further contamination while doing so
- wash any affected parts of your body with plenty of cold water
- get medical help quickly
- give the United Nations number of the substance
- get advice from the specialist assistance contact. If this is not known Operations Control can provide it.

You can tell if there are dangerous goods in a vehicle or in a package because it will carry a hazard warning label like one of these.



5

Communications procedure

The people responsible: all concerned, driver, signaller

5.1 Communicating clearly

all concerned

You must make sure you properly understand the meaning of all messages whether they are communicated by phone, radio or face-to-face.

You must:

- make sure you are talking to the right person
- give your exact location, if you are using a phone or a radio
- give your name and that of your employer
- state what task you are carrying out
- if necessary, let the person know how you can be contacted
- use the phonetic alphabet to make sure names and locations that are difficult to pronounce are fully understood, and
- never use the words 'not clear' to describe a line that is obstructed, always use '**line blocked**'.

You must say numbers one at a time. You should say 8107 as 'eight, one, zero, seven'. There are exceptions to this such as when giving the time or when referring to a rule book module or handbook.

If you are receiving a message, make sure you fully understand it. You must repeat the message back so that the other person knows you correctly understand it.

To help make sure your message is fully understood when using a telephone or radio:

all
concerned

- speak with the mouthpiece close to your mouth and speak directly into the mouthpiece
- talk slightly slower than normal using a natural rhythm
- use your normal level of volume when speaking
- avoid using hesitation sounds for example 'um' and 'er'
- use clear sentences, and
- get the person to repeat your message back to you.

5.2 Using communications equipment

You must not use communications equipment if it may cause a distraction or affect safety.

all
concerned

If you are on or near the line, make sure you are in a position of safety before using mobile communications equipment.

Unless it is an emergency, you must not use the group call, general call or conference-call facility for passing instructions to do with:

- passing signals at danger
- passing an end of authority (EoA) without a movement authority (MA)
- protecting trains
- wrong-direction movements
- unsignalled movements.

5.3 Lead responsibility

all concerned

During any conversation, one person must always take lead responsibility. The person who must take lead responsibility depends on the task being carried out. Examples are shown below.

Lead responsibility	When communicating with
Electrical control operator (ECO)	anyone
Signaller	anyone except the ECO
PICOP (person in charge of the possession)	anyone except the ECO or signaller
Route-setting agent	points operator
Shunter	driver
Pilot	driver
Handsignaller	driver
Person conducting assisting train	driver of assisting train
Conductor driver	driver of train or machine being conducted
Designated person (DP)	members of the work group

If it is not clear who has lead responsibility, or if two people carrying out the same task are communicating with each other, the person who starts the conversation must always take lead responsibility.

5.4 Using phrases

all concerned

a) Phrases to use when using a radio or telephone

Phrase	Meaning
This is an emergency call	This message provides information which needs immediate action to prevent death, serious injury or damage.
Repeat back	Repeat all of the message back to me

Correction I have made a mistake and will now correct the word or phrase just said.

b) Other phrases to use when using a radio and only one person can be heard at a time

Phrase	Meaning
Over	I have finished my message and am expecting a reply.
Out	I have finished my message no reply is expected.

5.5 Using the phonetic alphabet

You must use the phonetic alphabet:

- to identify letters of the alphabet
- to spell words and place names that are difficult to say, or may be misunderstood
- if there is interference on the radio or phone
- when quoting the identity of signals or points
- when quoting train descriptions.

all
concerned

all
concerned

This is the phonetic alphabet.

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| A - alpha | N - november |
| B - bravo | O - oscar |
| C - charlie | P - papa |
| D - delta | Q - quebec |
| E - echo | R - romeo |
| F - foxtrot | S - sierra |
| G - golf | T - tango |
| H - hotel | U - uniform |
| I - india | V - victor |
| J - juliet | W - whisky |
| K - kilo | X - x-ray |
| L - lima | Y - yankee |
| M - mike | Z - zulu |

5.6 Signaller instructing a driver

signaller

You must give all instructions to a driver in one of the following ways:

- direct (face to face)
- direct (via telephone or radio)
- through the guard, shunter, pilot, handsignaller
- through any other person who is competent in the relevant rules.

driver

You will receive all instructions from a signaller in one of the following ways:

- direct (face to face)
- direct (via telephone or radio)
- through the guard, shunter, pilot, handsignaller
- through any other person who is competent in the relevant rules.

6

Trackside definitions

The people responsible: all concerned

Operational railway

The term operational railway includes the area called on the lineside and the area called on or near the line.

all
concerned

The lineside

You are on the lineside (shown green in diagram G1.1) if you are between the railway boundary and the area called 'on or near the line'.

You are not on the lineside if you are on a station platform.

On or near the line

You are on or near the line (shown orange in diagram G1.1) if you are:

- within 3 metres (10 feet) of a line and there is no permanent fence or structure between you and the line
- on the line itself.

You are not on or near the line if you are on a station platform unless you are carrying out engineering or technical work within

1.25 metres (4 feet) of the platform edge.

You are not on or near the line if you are crossing the line at a level crossing.

Positions on or near the line

The following terms are used to describe the different positions on or near the line.

The terms shown are not exact measurements.

The cess is the space alongside the line or lines on the outside edge of the running rail.

The four-foot is the space between the rails of one line.

The six-foot is the space between one line and another (where the rails are the normal distance apart),

The ten-foot is the space between one line and another where there is a wide space between a pair of lines and there are three lines or more. This distance may be less than 10 feet.

A position of safety

If the maximum speed is 100 mph (160 km/h) or less, you are in a position of safety if you are at least 1.25 metres (4 feet) from the nearest line on which a train can approach.

If the maximum speed is over 100 mph (160 km/h), the distance increases to 2 metres (6 feet 6 inches).

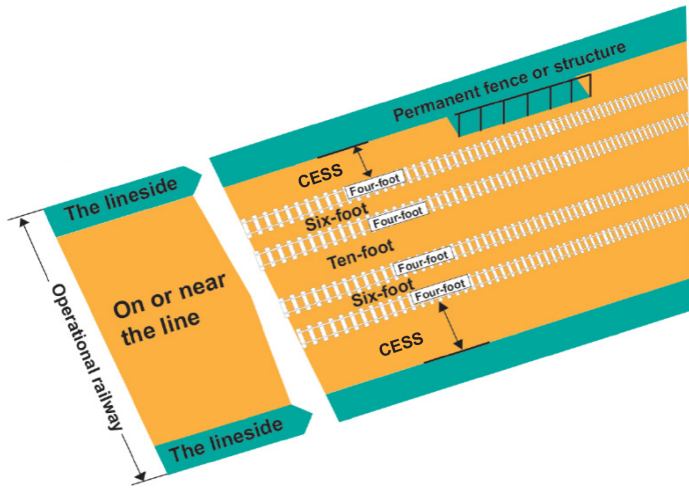


Diagram G1.1

7

Going on the operational railway

The people responsible: all concerned

7.1 General

all concerned

You do not need to carry a certificate showing that you are competent in the track-safety rules shown in this module as long as your regular assessment contains track-safety rules.

You must wear clean high-visibility clothing of an approved type in the correct way whenever you are on the operational railway.

You may carry small items with you. Any items you do carry with you must not affect your ability to walk safely or to see or hear and acknowledge approaching trains.

Make sure you have a suitable hand lamp with you during poor visibility, darkness, or if you are to enter a tunnel.

7.2 Local knowledge

all concerned

Before you go on or near the line, you must know about all of the following for each line:

- the maximum speed
- the direction from which trains normally approach
- the location of any area where you must not go while trains are running
- any location with limited clearances.

7.3 While walking

You must use authorised walking routes if they are provided.

If you have to cross the line, you must not step on rails or sleepers or between movable parts of points.

If you have to use a mobile phone, first move to a position of safety and then stand still until you have finished using the phone.

Do not wear anything that makes you less able to see or hear approaching trains.

Do not allow yourself to be distracted by anyone or anything.

Keep a good lookout for approaching trains.

Make sure you look up at least every 5 seconds so that you can reach a position of safety and be in it no less than 10 seconds before an approaching train arrives.

When a train approaches

When a train approaches you must immediately move to a position of safety or, if already in a position of safety, stay there.

If the driver sounds the warning horn, raise one arm above your head to show you have heard the warning.

You must stay in your position of safety until the train has passed clear or you are certain you will not be put in danger by that train or any other train.

all
concerned

8

Limited clearances and related warning signs

The people responsible: all concerned

8.1 Limited clearance signs

Limited clearance warning sign

all concerned



There is no position of safety on this side of the railway for the length of the structure. You must not enter or stand at that location when trains are running.

No refuges warning sign



There is no position of safety on this side of the railway for the length of the structure. However, there are positions of safety, or refuges, on the opposite side of the railway line.

Prohibition sign



You must not pass beyond this sign while trains are running unless you are carrying out emergency protection. This is because you would not be able to reach a position of safety or refuge safely. If you are carrying out emergency protection, you must take extreme care.

8.2 Limited clearance at telephones

Some telephones are positioned where there is limited clearance between the telephone and the adjacent lines. You may use these telephones only in an emergency and then only if no other form of communication is available.

all
concerned

One or more of the following signs identifies these telephones.



Note: A driver of a train at a signal with any of the signs shown above is allowed to use the signal post telephone under specific arrangements.

Fundamental operating principles

Core operational aim

The core aim of the fundamental operational principles is to enable the safe and timely delivery of people and goods to their destination.

Fundamental operational principles

- 1 The method of signalling must maintain a space interval between trains that is safe.
- 2 Before a train is allowed to start or continue moving, it must have an authority to move that clearly indicates the limit of that authority.
- 3 Trains proceeding over any portion of line must not be obstructed in a way that threatens their safety.
- 4 Trains must be prevented from proceeding onto a portion of line if it is known or suspected that it would not be safe for them to pass.
- 5 Trains must not be allowed to begin or continue their journeys until it is clear it is safe for them to do so.
- 6 Trains must only be allowed to operate over any portion of line as long as the rolling stock is compatible with the infrastructure on that portion of line.
- 7 Trains must not continue to operate after they have been found to be unsafe in any respect, until measures have been taken to allow them to continue safely.
- 8 People must be kept a safe distance from moving trains.
- 9 The workforce must be protected from the particular hazards associated with electrified railways.

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