NetworkRail

KEYPOINTS

Frontline Safety Critical Communications

All Operational Communication
by Frontline Staff is
Considered to be
Safety Critical

Issue one valid from June 2018

Keypoint Cards have been produced for many of the track safety competencies, as a reminder of the main duties, rules and requirements.

Further copies are available from Willsons Group Services.

To obtain an order form, email:

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(phone **01636 702334** or fax **01636 701396**)

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO GET FRONTLINE SAFETY CRITICAL COMMUNICATIONS ACCURATE, BRIEF, CLEAR AND PROFESSIONAL IMPORTANT?

Signaller and Driver

A train driver asked to have an adjacent line blocked to allow them to examine their train due to a suspected fault. The Line Block was granted.

The driver had to dive to the ground to avoid being hit by an approaching train travelling at 110 mph.

A clear understanding was not reached with the signaller over 'which line' the driver required to be blocked.

A close one…

Person in Charge of Possession (PICOP) and Possession Support

The PICOP asked the Possession Support (PS) to place the protection for the possession on UP Main ahead of Echo Foxtrot 245 points.

The PS was placing protection the wrong side of the points a near miss occurred. The wrong side was an open line for line speed traffic.

A near miss on this occasion

WHAT IS SAFETY CRITICAL COMMUNICATIONS?

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By operations we mean any conversation that involved activities on or near the line

- Train movement
- Signals
- Track
- Stations
- Work on or near the Infrastructure

By front-line staff we mean those doing the following types of work on or that affect operational railway activities:

- Maintenance
- Train or Freight operating companies
- Signalling
- Station operations
- Driving
- Shunting
- Infrastructure Projects
- Contractors

Safety critical communications are formal conversations.

As professionals, we must all take responsibility for safety critical communications.

GUIDANCE ON USING RULE BOOK SAFETY CRITICAL COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

To help us communicate clearly, we use communications protocols to keep Safety Critical Communications:

A – Accurate

B – Brief

C – Clear

P – Professional

Ways to achieve this include:

- Speak slowly
- Do not interrupt others
- Be precise in your descriptions (for example: locations, obstructions)
- Use the Phonetic Alphabet
- Say number singularly (Use the 24 clock for the time of day)
- Avoid using slang or jargon
- Plan what you are going to say before you say it – think about the structure of the conversation
- Repeat back what has been said, the other persons opening details, information, instructions.
- If possible, find a dry, quiet location from which to communicate.
- Always make sure you are in a position of safety.

FRONTLINE SAFETY CRITICAL COMMUNICATION STRUCTURE

Good safety critical communications have a four-part structure:

- Opening
- Information
- Actions
- Confirmation

If possible, plan what you want to say in each part before starting your communication.

The structure to follow is:

Opening
State your role, state your name, where we you are,

Information
The reason you are calling,

Actions
What you are requiring the other person to do next,

Confirmation
Repeat back the key parts of the conversation

THE REPEAT BACK

Repeating back information is vital to confirming understanding of all involved.

The person with Lead Responsibility must always confirm that everybody involved in a communication understands the message being sent.

This might require asking for a 'repeat back'.

We must listen and check the content of a repeat back to make sure it is correct.

Repeat backs can occur at any stage in a message, but must occur at the end.

Listen to what is being said: does it accurately reflect what is required to happen next?

We need to avoid repeating information parrot fashion without thinking about what we are saying or what it means.

If a repeat back is wrong, the person with Lead Responsibility must restate the actions, and ask for another repeat back.

What does lead responsibility mean?

Lead responsibility means that one person leads the communication.

They ensure that a clear understanding is reached by all.

The person who has lead responsibility is normally the signaller or the person that has initiated the call.

MAKING AN EMERGENCY CALL

If you ever need to make an emergency call, this is what you need to remember:

Take a deep breath and plan what you will say in advance:

- The structure of the conversation is the same as you would in any other safety critical communication.

Opening / Information / Actions / Confirming

Opening:

- This is an emergency call
- Give your name
- your job title
- your employer
- who you are speaking too
- where you are speaking from
- your telephone or radio call number.

Information:

- The exact location of the emergency
- Details of the accident including
- Whether any lines blocked by an obstruction or may be blocked.
- You must also say which emergency services are needed.
  - the access point/location for the emergency services if known
- Information given should be accurate, brief, clear – the emergency may be time critical

Actions:

- These will be instructions

Confirmation:

- make sure a repeat back of the key parts of the message happens

The only exception is when reporting a dangerous goods emergency, when the call must start with the words:

'This is a rail dangerous goods emergency.'

CHALLENGING POOR SAFETY CRITICAL COMMUNICATIONS

We all should be prepared to do this.

Effective challenging requires that we focus on the subject, not the person

There are many reasons why we may fail to challenge incorrect information, some examples are:

- Failing to listen correctly
- Fear of making a mistake and being made to look foolish
- Over-respect for authority

Safety is more important; look back at the examples given at the start of these key points.

Active listening. In active listening we hear the words, understand what they mean, and give an appropriate response.

If the response is positive but you know there is something wrong you may need to ask a question, a challenge.

You can challenge by asking questions such as:

- Can you clarify which lines are the up and the down please?
- Can I confirm what you said about… please?

THE PHONETIC ALPHABET

A	B	C	D	E	F
Alpha	Bravo	Charlie	Delta	Echo	Foxtrot
G	H	I	J	K	L
Golf	Hotel	India	Juliet	Kilo	Lima
M	N	O	P	Q	R
Mike	November	Oscar	Papa	Quebec	Romeo
S	T	U	V	W	X
Sierra	Tango	Uniform	Victor	Whisky	X-ray
Y	Z				
Yankee	Zulu				

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This key point's reminder has been developed to promote

Home Safe Every Day

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