Protecting in-service rail traffic inspections and repairs

Introduction

In-service rail traffic inspections and repairs or Rail Traffic Operator operational activities may be carried out:

- in a location where rail traffic can be excluded from the affected portion of track, or
- in an existing safe place, or
- in a safe place created using stationary rail traffic.

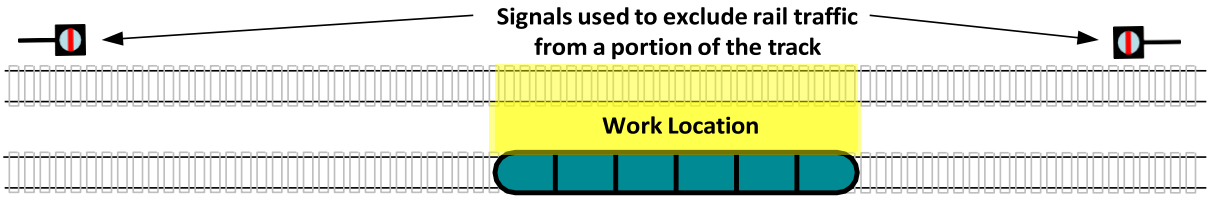

Figure 1: Example of rail traffic excluded from a work location.

NOTE:

For Figure 1, Traffic Controllers must also:

- apply blocking facilities to exclude rail traffic in UTO or PM modes, and
- ensure manually operated rail traffic does not enter the affected portion of track.

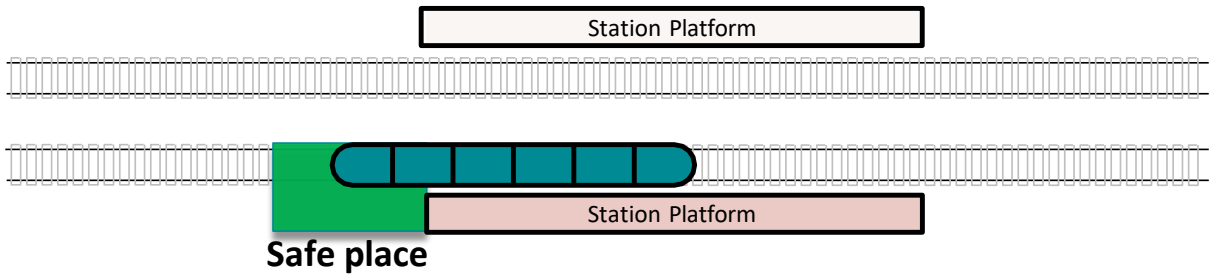

Figure 2: Example of an existing safe place.

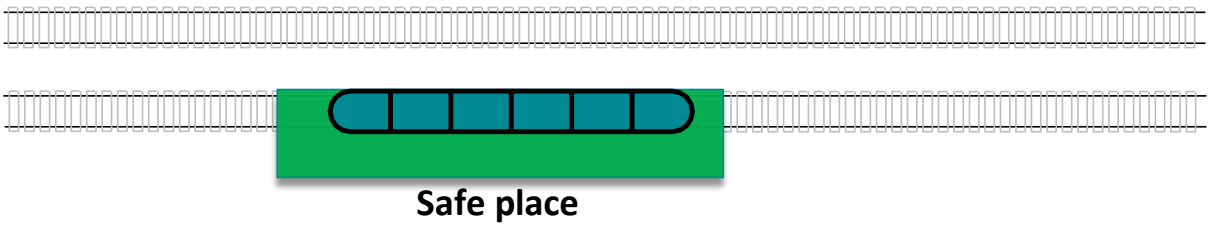

Figure 3: Example of a safe place created by stationary rail traffic.

Requesting protection

Rail Traffic Operator or Maintenance Representative

1. Tell the Traffic Controller:
   - your name, and
   - your Safeworking designation, and
   - your current location, and
   - the train number or track vehicle number, and
   - the type of work.
2. Identify the line on which protection is required and nominate the work location as being:
   - between any two stations, or
   - completely within a siding, or
   - completely within the limits of a platform, including the station name and platform number.

WARNING

Lines that need to be accessed must be protected when conducting:

- **in-service inspections and repairs, or**
- **operational activities**

3. Ask the Traffic Controller to protect all points of entry into the affected portion of track.

Traffic Controller

4. Confirm the protection request including the:
   - Rail Traffic Operator's or Maintenance Representative's name, and
   - train number or track vehicle number, and
   - type of work, and
   - line on which protection is required, and
   - nominated worksite location.
5. Use the reference points provided by the Rail Traffic Operator or Maintenance Representative to identify the worksite location.
6. Identify if the work requires more than one Traffic Controller to exclude rail traffic. If the proposed work affects more than one Traffic Controller, the Traffic Controllers must confer and nominate an authorising Traffic Controller.

Traffic Controller/ Authorising Traffic Controller

7. Make sure that:
   - blocking facilities have been applied to exclude rail traffic, and
   - the last rail traffic to enter the affected portion of track is identified and its location is known, and
   - there is no rail traffic approaching the work location.

Authorising Traffic Controller

8. Tell the Rail Traffic Operator or Maintenance Representative:
   - that blocking facilities have been applied and that the affected portion of track is protected, and
   - the identification number of the last rail traffic to enter the affected portion of track and its last known location, and
   - that there is no rail traffic approaching the work location.

Rail Traffic Operator or Maintenance Representative

9. Confirm with the Traffic Controller:
   - that all points of entry into the affected portion of track are correctly protected, and
   - the identification number of the last rail traffic to enter the affected portion of track and its last known location, and
   - that there is no rail traffic approaching the work location.

Authorising protection

Traffic Controller

1. Once the Rail Traffic Operator or Maintenance Representative has confirmed the assurances:
   - authorise the protection, and
   - issue the Route Blocking number.

Rail Traffic Operator or Maintenance Representative

2. Before entering the Danger Zone, make sure that:
   - the protection is authorised, and
   - the Route Blocking number has been issued.

Conducting in-service inspections and repairs

Rail Traffic Operator or Maintenance Representative

1. Before carrying out an in-service inspection or repair make sure that:
   - a safe place exists, or protection has been authorised, and
   - unless conducting a roll-by inspection, affected rail traffic will remain stationary.

WARNING

If a Maintenance Representative is carrying out an in-service inspection or repair, rail traffic must not be moved until authorised by the Maintenance Representative.

Maintenance Representative

2. If practicable:
   - apply the parking brake, and
   - open the brake pipe emergency tap, and
   - place a red “out of use” tag over the brake pipe emergency tap.

Note:

If required, Qualified Workers must work as directed by the Maintenance Representative.

3. When work has been completed, tell the Rail Traffic Operator that work is complete, and if required:
   - remove the red “out of use” tag from the brake pipe emergency tap, and
   - close the brake pipe emergency tap, and
   - release the park brake.

Removing protection

Rail Traffic Operator or Maintenance Representative

1. Tell the Traffic Controller:
   - the work location, and
   - the train number or track vehicle number, and
   - the Route Blocking number, and
   - that workers and equipment are clear of the Danger Zone.

Traffic Controller

2. Before removing protection, confirm with the Rail Traffic Operator or Maintenance Representative:
   - the train number or track vehicle number, and
   - the work location, and
   - the Route Blocking number, and
   - that all workers and equipment are clear of the Danger Zone.

Protecting in-service rail traffic inspections and repairs

Keeping records

Traffic Controllers, Rail Traffic Operators and Maintenance Representatives must record the protection details in permanent form.

Procedures

MPR 703 Route Blocking

Effective date

28 April 2025