



In August 2019, Network Rail requested additional guidance be issued to Assured Providers regarding the duration, delegate numbers and Infrastructure requirements relating to the PTS Initial Track Visit and this was published in an NSAR Briefing Note 13. Despite this, we are aware that there are issues still being experienced by trainers and training providers deviating from mandated PTS Initial Track Visit requirements.

We have taken action to address concerns raised with the PTS Initial Training materials and in addition we issue this explicit guidance to mitigate any future justification for non-conformance and/or breach of RTAS Rules and Network Rail standards.

Conduct of Track Visits also needs to conform to Rule Book and Safe Work requirements and whilst this is clear to most Assured Trainers and Providers, we are aware that these are increasingly being cited as justification for non-conformances identified under Assurance requirements and during investigation.

The safety of novice learners is paramount during PTS Initial Training therefore the mandated training and safety arrangements must be applied.

**The Track Visit and Practical Assessment are detailed separately within the mandated training materials.**

*The current PTS lesson plan ‘Delivery Information’ states:*

### **Safety [Page 1, column 1]:**

A safe system of work is required to deliver the practical element of this course as it must be undertaken in a live track environment.

### **Practical Environment [Page 1, column 3]:**

The initial PTS course has a mandatory requirement for all delegates to be taken onto the live track environment for the trackside assessment. Minimum timescales are detailed in the session plan.

This must be a safe environment, possibly a sidings or a slow line with appropriate protection in place. Where it is not practicable to carry out other practical elements on the live infrastructure (e.g. placing detonators, hand danger signals, placing TCOC), a test track or simulated facility can be utilised for this part of the practical element.

### **Practical Materials [Page 1, column 4]:**

Equipment required:

- PPE
- Means of communication (Telephone System)
- Sufficient detonators that are in date and serviceable, in an approved container
- Sufficient Possession Limit Boards
- Red flag/Handlamp capable of showing red
- Appropriate armllets or badges
- Safe Work Pack (SWP)
- Track Circuit Operating Clip

### **Session 6: Track Visit and Practical Assessment [Page 13]:**

Note: The Track Visit must involve a minimum of 90 minutes spent out on the infrastructure. This does NOT include any time spent travelling to and from the site. A maximum of 6 delegates per Trainer/COSS/SWL can be taken onto the track at any one time. And

Trainers must ensure that delegates spend a minimum of 90 minutes on the infrastructure during the track visit (this does NOT include time spent travelling to or from the site).

Ensure that all items on the Track Visit Checklist (Appendix B) have been covered, and that all delegates have participated in practical activities, for example crossing the lines safely.

Demonstrate correct procedures where appropriate.



### **Practical Assessment Guidance [Page 33 – Track Visit/Practical Assessment]:**

Delegates must achieve all mandatory elements of the Track Visit Assessment. If the delegate fails to achieve all mandatory elements on the Track Visit the delegate will be deemed Not Yet Competent and the sponsor should be advised accordingly. Mandatory elements are identified by an 'M' preceding the question number.

Delegates must be questioned on all non-mandatory elements of the Track Visit Assessment not demonstrated. If the trainer is then satisfied that the delegate has the correct level of competence they can tick the relevant box(es). And

The Track Visit/Practical/Assessment MUST be undertaken on Initial PTS courses only.

If competence is achieved in Knowledge, Track Visit and Practical Assessments, the delegate can be certified on successfully completing the Personal Track Safety Course.

### **The current Practical Assessment Record [Page 1, item M2]:**

M2: Correctly wears all mandatory PPE before going 'On or near line'

### **The applicable Rule Book Handbooks state:**

#### **Handbook 1**

*General duties and track safety for track workers - page 3*

#### On or near the line

You are on or near the line (shown orange in diagram HB1.1) 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.'

#### **Handbook 3**

*Duties of the lookout and site warden – pages 2-3*

#### Site-warden duties

The COSS or SWL will tell you who to watch and the boundary of the safe area as well as where you must stand.

You must not leave your post until the COSS or SWL tells you that you are no longer needed to act as site warden or you are relieved by another site warden. The COSS or SWL will make sure you understand the limits of the safe area.

You must watch the group and make sure that no one moves beyond the safe limits laid down by the COSS or SWL. You must warn anyone who attempts to move beyond the safe limits by shouting 'get back'. If they do not immediately move back into the safe area, you must give a series of short sharp blasts on the whistle or horn until they do move back into the safe area.

While you are acting as a site warden you must:

- Make sure your mobile phone is switched off
- Stay alert and carefully watch the group.

You must not:

- Take part in the actual work
- Carry out any other duties, unless you are also the COSS or SWL
- Allow yourself to be distracted.

You must immediately let the COSS or SWL know if you do not believe you can continue to give an adequate warning or you cannot continue your duties as a site warden.



### *What does this mean?*

1. The PTS Track Visit is 'working' and is **subject to Rule Book requirements**.
2. The PTS Track Visit **must** take place '**on or near the line**'
  - 2.1. Station **Platforms** are **not** 'on or near the line' in line with the Rule Book.
  - 2.2. **Heritage railway** (subject to ROGs) **can be used** for the track visit **provided that**:
    - 2.2.1. The arrangements are documented, e.g. signed proof of heritage railway agreement to use the railway (their Operating officer and head of training company signature, provided to NSAR).
    - 2.2.2. There is a written SWP produced in accordance with NR/L2/OHS/019 to include the exact locations to be used for the track visit.
    - 2.2.3. There are documented risk assessments, signed off by the training manager **and** the heritage railway operating officer
    - 2.2.4. There is **documented evidence that** the Heritage Railway is **running trains on the day, date, and time of the track visit** that the delegates experience. If trains do not pass the track visit, then the visit is **not valid** and will need to be repeated in full. **No exceptions** to this evidence requirement will be accepted.
3. The delegates **must** be 'on or near the line' for **90 minutes** with no more than 6 delegates per trainer in line with the Rule Book and lesson plan.
4. Being 'on or near the line' **requires a valid Safe Work Pack** with appropriate protection in line with NR/L2/OHS/019 and the Rule Book.
5. Elements of the practical assessment that cannot be completed safely 'on or near the line' must be completed in a safe rail layout location and is **in addition to the mandated 90 minutes**.
6. PTS Track Visits require the people resource requirements applicable to the Safe System of Work arrangements detailed in the Safe Work Pack e.g. if conducted under Site Warden arrangements a separate Site Warden must accompany the group to undertake the role.
7. Network Rail requires that all mobile devices (e.g. Phones, tablets) are switched off if acting as a Site Warden or Lookout. All delegates must have any mobile device switched off.

### *The trainer role during the PTS Track Walk?*

1. The trainer must make sure that all elements of the Mandatory practical criteria are assessed for each learner and this is recorded.
2. The trainer must make sure that their attention is on teaching novice delegates on how to understand their surroundings and act safely within a live rail environment.
3. The trainer delivering the event can be the COSS and trainer for the group.
4. The trainer delivering the event cannot act as the Site Warden or Lookout for the group.

### *What happens now?*

All Assured Providers should brief their trainers and supporting departments/contractors who provide Safe Work Packs for them of the content of this briefing and confirm that all PTS Track Visits are compliant with the lesson plan, Rule Book, Network Rail standards and the RTAS Rules.

Network Rail has instructed the Assurance Organisation that:

1. Non-conformances found in courses prior to the date of this briefing are recorded as major non-conformances and development in this area is required within their action plans.
2. RTAS Formal Review's already determined and/or in progress continue as this briefing is explicit guidance of existing requirements.



3. Non-conformances found in course packs after the date of this briefing shall be immediately subject to RTAS Formal Review and Providers and Trainers involved will be temporarily suspended from all RTAS delivery pending conclusion of the formal review, in line with the RTAS Rules, **Clause 11.4**.

#### *Additional Information*

Network Rail have committed to reviewing the current duration of the Track Visit [90 minutes] to evaluate its suitability to the content of the assessment requirements but until otherwise advised the 90 minutes requirement remains and is mandatory.

Assured Providers requiring additional support should contact the Assurance Organisation via the Freshdesk system.