OPE NTSN 2021 issue 2

Operation and Traffic Management National Technical Specification Notice

Briefing note

Background

The first Operation and Traffic Management (OPE) National Technical Specification Notice (NTSN) replaced and substantially reproduced the provisions of the OPE Technical Specification for Interoperability (TSI) which applied on 31 December 2020.

Since then, Regulation (EU) 2019/773 has entered into force in the EU as the OPE TSI. This includes changes to the OPE TSI, covering areas such as: route compatibility checks, driver documentation, information exchange and safety related communications.

To avoid unnecessary divergence with European regulations and ensure the GB rail sector receives the benefits of improvements to the OPE TSI, the OPE NTSN is being updated in some areas to reflect this.

What is it about?

The OPE NTSN sets out requirements for the operation of trains to meet the essential requirements in the Railways (Interoperability) Regulations 2011 (as amended) (RIR).

This focuses on the interfaces between Railway Undertakings and Infrastructure Managers and should be read alongside the other NTSNs.

What has changed?

The OPE NTSN content and structure aligns more closely with the current OPE TSI. This includes permitting the use of 'Mayday, Mayday, Mayday' alongside current emergency terminology, adding Fundamental Operational Principles, and updating references and definitions.

However, this does not include all updates made by Regulation (EU) 2019/773 in the OPE TSI where this is not expected to be in the best interests of the GB rail sector. Examples include the use of the RINF application for exchanging information and the updates in relation to route compatibility checks which are not expected to benefit GB operations.

As a package of changes, these are not expected to change existing requirements with any material impacts on GB operational practice.

What are the benefits?

This OPE NTSN removes potential barriers to interoperability and improves regulatory compliance by aligning requirements and aiding comparison with the current OPE TSI.

Who is it for?

This document is primarily for all Infrastructure Managers and Railway Undertakings within the scope of RIR.