

## **Communication of urgent operating advice**

### **Synopsis**

This standard sets out requirements, rationale and guidance for reporting and communicating urgent operating safety information.

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#### Issue record

Issue	Date	Comments
One	December 2016	Replaces Railway Group Standard GORT3350 issue 1, which could not be retained as a National Safety Rule and is therefore reclassified as a Rail Industry Standard. Technical content otherwise unchanged from GORT3350 issue 5.
Two	June 2023 [proposed]	Replaces issue one following five-year review.

Revisions have not been marked by a vertical black line in this issue because the document has been revised throughout.

#### Superseded documents

The following Railway Group documents are superseded, either in whole or in part as indicated:

Superseded documents	Sections superseded	Date when sections are superseded
RIS-3350-TOM, issue 1, Communication of Urgent Operating Advice	All	June 2023 [proposed]

#### Supply

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## Part 1 Purpose and Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1 This standard sets out requirements, rationale and guidance for reporting and communicating urgent operating safety information.

### 1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 Regulation 22(3) of the Railways and Other Guided Transport Systems (Safety) Regulations (2006) (as amended) (ROGS) requires infrastructure managers, railway undertakings, and anyone else who must have a safety management system, to co-operate to make sure the railway is safe. As part of this duty of co-operation, it is important that infrastructure managers and railway undertakings have a process to communicate effectively and rapidly to share applicable safety learning with each other when:

- accidents, incidents or dangerous occurrences happen; and
- other infrastructure managers or railway undertakings could be affected, and therefore need to take urgent action.

### 1.3 Principles

- 1.3.1 This standard is based on the principle that the infrastructure manager processes urgent operating advice received from a railway undertaking or other infrastructure manager, and communicates this to other infrastructure managers and railway undertakings. A designated person in each organisation receiving the advice will then decide whether this is applicable to that organisation's operations, and arrange for action to be taken to control any risk.

### 1.4 Scope

- 1.4.1 The scope of reporting required by this standard is limited to urgent operating advice. This is set out in more detail in [A.1](#). Different arrangements apply for communicating urgent safety-related advice about control, command and signalling (CCS) equipment and rolling stock. These are set out in the following RSSB standards:
- RIS-0707-CCS Management of Safety-Related Control, Command and Signalling System Failures.
  - RIS-8250-RST Management of Safety-Related Rail Vehicle Defects
- 1.4.2 RSSB has produced Technical Note TN105 which includes a flowchart to assist infrastructure managers and railway undertakings with deciding which is the appropriate process to use for urgent safety-related reporting.
- 1.4.3 The requirements in this standard are in addition to the requirements set out in the GERT8000 Rule Book, and RIS-8047-TOM Reporting of Safety Related Information. There may be other reporting requirements imposed by legislation, including ROGS and the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).

- 1.4.4 Measures in this standard support the requirements in RIS-3119-TOM Accident and Incident Investigation for urgent communication of information arising from investigations into accidents or incidents.

## 1.5 Application of this document

- 1.5.1 Compliance requirements and dates have not been specified because these are the subject of internal procedures or contract conditions.
- 1.5.2 If you plan to do something that does not comply with a requirement in this RIS, you can ask a Standards Committee to comment on your proposed alternative. If you want a Standards Committee to do this, please submit your deviation application form to RSSB. You can find advice and guidance on using alternative requirements on RSSB's website [www.rssb.co.uk](http://www.rssb.co.uk).

## 1.6 Health and safety responsibilities

- 1.6.1 Users of documents published by RSSB are reminded of the need to consider their own responsibilities to ensure health and safety at work and their own duties under health and safety legislation. RSSB does not warrant that compliance with all or any documents published by RSSB is sufficient in itself to ensure safe systems of work or operation or to satisfy such responsibilities or duties.

## 1.7 Structure of this document

- 1.7.1 This document sets out a series of requirements that are sequentially numbered. This document also sets out the rationale for the requirement, explaining why the requirement is needed and its purpose and, where relevant, guidance to support the requirement. The rationale and the guidance are prefixed by the letter 'G'.
- 1.7.2 Some subjects do not have specific requirements but the subject is addressed through guidance only and, where this is the case, it is distinguished under a heading of 'Guidance' and is prefixed by the letter 'G'.

## 1.8 Approval and authorisation of this document

- 1.8.1 The content of this document will be approved by the Traffic Operation and Management Standards Committee on 28 March 2023 [proposed].
- 1.8.2 This document will be authorised by RSSB on 24 April 2023 [proposed].

## Part 2 Requirements for infrastructure managers

### 2.1 Publishing the arrangements for giving and receiving urgent operating advice

- 2.1.1 Infrastructure managers shall publish the arrangements for giving and receiving urgent operating advice between themselves, railway undertakings and other infrastructure managers.

#### Rationale

- G 2.1.2 The infrastructure manager is able to provide a central 'hub' for distributing urgent operating advice throughout its infrastructure.

- G 2.1.3 Publishing the arrangements for reporting and communicating urgent operating advice will ensure that other infrastructure managers and railway undertakings are aware of:

- a) their obligations to report urgent operating advice
- b) the process they must follow to report it
- c) how they will be notified of urgent operating advice.

#### Guidance

- G 2.1.4 Current practice on the GB mainline railway is that urgent operating advice is reported to the infrastructure manager using the Rail Notices website.
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### 2.2 Distribution of urgent operating advice

- 2.2.1 Infrastructure managers shall, on receiving urgent operating advice, distribute this to railway undertakings and other infrastructure managers who may be affected.

#### Rationale

- G 2.2.2 Distributing urgent operating advice to other organisations in the rail industry who may be affected will enable these organisations to take appropriate action to control any hazards identified.

#### Guidance

- G 2.2.3 In practice, on the GB mainline railway, the infrastructure manager distributes urgent operating advice to other organisations who may be affected using the Rail Notices system.
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## Part 3 Requirements for infrastructure managers and railway undertakings

### 3.1 Identifying when urgent operating advice is required

- 3.1.1 Infrastructure managers and railway undertakings shall identify when urgent operating advice from their organisation is required to be sent to other railway undertakings and infrastructure managers.

#### Rationale

- G 3.1.2 Identifying the requirement to communicate urgent operating advice enables this process to be started and safety learning shared promptly.

#### Guidance

- G 3.1.3 It is good practice for infrastructure managers and railway undertakings to:
- a) have internal processes to review operating incidents or failures involving their staff or equipment;
  - b) include in these processes guidance on what is required to be reported by this standard; and
  - c) include in these processes guidance on appropriate timescales for reporting depending on the level of urgency associated with the incident or defect.
- G 3.1.4 It is good practice for infrastructure managers and railway undertakings to provide training for their staff who manage the reporting processes set out in this standard, to include:
- a) identifying incidents that are required to be reported by this standard; and
  - b) a full understanding of the reporting process for urgent operating advice.
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### 3.2 Reporting urgent operating advice

- 3.2.1 Infrastructure managers and railway undertakings shall report urgent operating advice to the infrastructure manager in line with published arrangements.

#### Rationale

- G 3.2.2 Following the infrastructure manager's published arrangements for sending urgent operating advice will enable the information to be communicated quickly to the appropriate organisations in the rail industry.

#### Guidance

- G 3.2.3 Current practice on the GB mainline railway is that urgent operating advice is reported to the infrastructure manager using the Rail Notices website.
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### 3.3 Recording the reporting of urgent operating advice

- 3.3.1 Infrastructure managers and railway undertakings shall record the reporting of urgent operating advice to the infrastructure manager.

#### Rationale

- G 3.3.2 Accurate recording will make sure that the sending of urgent operating advice is neither overlooked nor duplicated.

#### Guidance

- G 3.3.3 There is no guidance associated with this requirement.
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### 3.4 Reviewing and acting on urgent operating advice

- 3.4.1 Infrastructure managers and railway undertakings shall review and act appropriately upon reports of urgent operating advice sent to them by the infrastructure manager.

#### Rationale

- G 3.4.2 Reviewing reports of urgent operating advice received will allow infrastructure managers and railway undertakings to determine what actions they may need to take to change working practices, check equipment or modify equipment to avoid similar incidents or failures occurring.

#### Guidance

- G 3.4.3 There is no guidance associated with this requirement.
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## Appendices

### Appendix A      **Guidance on applying the requirements in this standard to the communication of urgent operating advice**

#### A.1      **Appendix A**

**Note:** The content of this appendix is provided for guidance only.

##### **Introduction and types of incident**

A.1.1      The reporting processes set out in this standard are for operating incidents or equipment failures arising from operational, rather than engineering, issues. The following guidance is provided to help infrastructure managers and railway undertakings determine whether an operating incident or equipment failure is reportable using these processes. RSSB has published Technical Note TN105 which includes a flow chart, to assist infrastructure managers and railway undertakings with deciding which is the appropriate process to use for urgent safety-related reporting.

A.1.2      There are two main types of event that may require the communication of urgent operating advice as set out in this standard. These are discussed in more detail below.

- a) Operating incidents.
- b) Certain types of equipment failure.

##### **Types of equipment failure that are reportable under this standard**

A.1.3      The only types of equipment failure that are reportable in line with the standard are where the equipment was used solely for train operation, and the failure was a consequence of the equipment being operated incorrectly.

A.1.4      For the purposes of this standard, 'equipment' refers only to equipment used to:

- a) prepare trains for movement;
- b) secure loads on rail vehicles;
- c) provide oral or visual communication necessary for the control of train movements; or
- d) protect people working on or near the line, passengers or members of the public from train movements.

A.1.5      The following types of equipment defect are excluded from the scope of this standard:

- a) Safety-related rail vehicle defects.
- b) Safety-related failures of the CCS system.

A.1.6      Arrangements for communicating urgent safety advice about these types of defect are set out in RIS-8250-RST and RIS-0707-CCS respectively.

A.1.7      Where instructions or rules have led to equipment being operated outside its defined scope or limits, causing it to fail, then the deficient instructions or rules are reportable in line with this standard.

**When to report operating incidents or equipment failures**

A.1.8 Operating incidents or equipment failures are reportable under this standard if the answer to both of the following questions is 'yes'.

- a) Was the operating incident or equipment failure 'high-risk', as defined in this standard? (see [page 10](#))
- b) Is it likely that the operating incident or equipment failure could recur?

A.1.9 In some circumstances doubt may exist about whether an incident or failure is reportable under this standard, and it may not appear to be reportable under either RIS-0707-CCS or RIS-8250-RST (see [page 9](#)). In this situation, there is likely to be a greater potential safety benefit by reporting under this standard rather than not reporting.

**Definitions of high-risk operating incidents and equipment failures**

A.1.10 A **high-risk operating incident** is an unplanned, uncontrolled event during train operations, including an irregular working practice that caused, or had the potential to cause:

- a) Death, major injury or ill-health to people; or
- b) Derailment or collision of trains.

A.1.11 A **high-risk equipment failure** is safety-related failure that caused, or had the potential to cause:

- a) Death, major injury or ill-health to people; or
- b) Derailment or collision of trains.

**Determining whether an operating incident or equipment failure is likely to recur**

A.1.12 If an operating incident or equipment failure is considered 'high-risk' according to the definitions on [page 10](#), it is then necessary to determine whether there is a likelihood that the incident could recur.

A.1.13 Determining whether an equipment failure arising from incorrect operation is likely to recur may be assisted by considering the following questions. This is not exhaustive.

- a) Is the same or similar equipment used by other infrastructure managers or railway undertakings on the GB mainline railway?
- b) If the failure happened because of an error by staff in operating the equipment:
  - i) was this because staff misunderstood how to operate the equipment?
  - ii) is any misunderstanding that led to the error likely to be widespread?
  - iii) did the misunderstanding arise from rules or instructions that were deficient in some way?

A.1.14 Operating incidents may arise when a member of staff makes an error because they either misunderstood or misapplied rules or instructions.

A.1.15 The following list of questions, which is not exhaustive, may help with determining whether an incident is likely to recur.

- a) Did the incident happen because of one isolated individual who made an error because they misunderstood or misapplied rules or instructions?
- b) Is it likely that the misunderstanding or misapplication is widespread across all staff, and could lead to others making the same error?
- c) Is it likely that the misunderstanding or misapplication is widespread across staff carrying out a particular job role, and could lead to them making the same error?
- d) Is it likely that staff working for other infrastructure managers or railway undertakings might make the same error because of the misunderstanding or misapplication?

## **Understanding the cause of a misunderstanding or misapplication of rules**

A.1.16 If, after considering the questions above, it seems likely that the misunderstanding or misapplication may be widespread, the next step is to understand how it arose. The following questions, which are not exhaustive, may help with this.

- a) Has the misunderstanding or misapplication arisen because of deficiencies in internal training or development processes?
- b) Has ambiguity, lack of clarity or another deficiency in rules or instructions led to misinterpretation, either by individuals or when incorporated into company standards?

A.1.17 RIS-3119-TOM Accident and Incident Investigation contains guidance on the Human Performance Factors and 10 Incident Factors. If an incident or failure has happened because a member of staff made an error, applying these factors when investigating can help with understanding the underlying causes that led the person to make that error.

## **Examples of operating incidents or equipment failures that are reportable in line with this standard**

A.1.18 Staff make an error as they misunderstand how to operate the parking brake on a particular type of rolling stock, leading (or potentially leading) to a train or vehicle running away.

A.1.19 A new type of rolling stock is introduced where a piece of safety-critical equipment is easy for staff to operate inadvertently to an unsafe state.

A.1.20 Staff make an error as they misunderstand how to use load-restraining equipment on a freight train and over-tighten it. This results in the components failing and leaving the load unsecured.

A.1.21 Seasonal precautions for hot or cold weather do not mitigate effectively against the weather conditions. Components overheat or freeze in traffic, leading (or potentially leading) to an accident.

A.1.22 An operating incident occurs where staff have made an error because they misapplied or misinterpreted a rule or instruction. The cause is likely to be deficiencies in staff training.

A.1.23 An operating incident occurs where staff have made an error because they misapplied or misinterpreted a rule or instruction. The rule or instruction is found to be unclear or ambiguous.

**Completing the report of urgent operating advice**

- A.1.24 The infrastructure manager is required, under this standard, to publish the arrangements for giving and receiving advice between itself, railway undertakings and other infrastructure managers.
- A.1.25 Applying the reporting arrangements set out by the infrastructure manager will help make sure that urgent operating advice is communicated promptly and effectively.
- A.1.26 In practice, on the GB mainline railway at the time of publication, urgent operating advice is reported and distributed using the Rail Notices website.

**Reporting timescales**

- A.1.27 This standard does not set out timescales for reporting incidents or failures. However, it is good practice for infrastructure managers and railway undertakings to set out reporting timescales in their own internal processes (see [3.1](#)).
- A.1.28 It is good practice for these timescales to be proportionate to the perceived urgency of the report, balancing the following two considerations:
- a) The need to find out if the incident or failure arose from systemic failings or widespread misunderstandings affecting all staff or a group of staff.
  - b) The importance of advising the industry as quickly as possible so that other organisations may change their working practices, or check or modify equipment, to avoid similar incidents or failures happening elsewhere.
- A.1.29 Legislation such as ROGS or RIDDOR may impose strict time limits for reporting certain types of incidents or failures.

## Definitions

accident	An unwanted or unintended sudden event or a specific chain of such events which has harmful consequences (including death, injury, loss of a system or service, and environmental damage).
defect	<p>Non-fulfilment of specified or intended usage requirements, which can prevent a component or part of a system from accomplishing its design purpose.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> A defect can lead to a fault in a component or system.</p>
failure	<p>An unwanted event where a system or component cannot, or is prevented from, functioning and/or performing as required.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> A failure has the potential to lead to an incident or accident.</p>
good practice	A process or method that has been shown to work well; succeeds in achieving its objective(s); is widely accepted; and therefore can be recommended as an approach.
incident	An unplanned, uncontrolled or unintended event which under different circumstances could have resulted in an accident.
infrastructure manager (IM)	Has the meaning given to it in the Railways and Other Guided Transport Systems (Safety) Regulations 2006 (as amended), but is limited to those infrastructure managers who hold a safety authorisation issued in respect of the mainline railway. Source: <i>ROGS</i>
railway undertaking (RU)	Has the meaning given to the term 'transport undertaking' in the Railways and Other Guided Transport Systems (Safety) Regulations 2006 as amended, but is limited to any private or public undertaking the principal business of which is to provide rail transport services for goods and/or passengers, with a requirement that the undertaking must ensure traction. Source: <i>ROGS</i>

## References

The Standards catalogue gives the current issue number and status of documents published by RSSB: <http://www.rsb.co.uk/standards-catalogue>.

RGSC 01	Railway Group Standards Code
RGSC 02	Standards Manual

## Documents referenced in the text

### RSSB documents

GERT8000	Rule Book
RIS-3119-TOM	Accident and Incident Investigation
RIS-8047-TOM	Reporting of Safety-Related Information
RIS-0707-CCS	Management of Safety-Related Control, Command and Signalling System Failures
RIS-8250-RST	Management of Safety-Related Rail Vehicle Defects
TN105	Technical note - Management and reporting of adverse events

### Other references

SI 2006/1057	The Railways and Other Guided Transport Systems (Safety) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
SI 2013/1471	The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013
LOC&PAS NTSN	Locomotive and Passenger National Technical Specification Notice (LOC&PAS NTSN). Published by the Secretary of State on 1 January 2021 pursuant to regulation 3B of the Railways (Interoperability) Regulations 2011. This NTSN replaces and substantially reproduces the provisions of Commission Regulation (EU) 1302/2014 (the LOC&PAS TSI), and includes relevant amendments made by Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/776 which came into force in June 2019.