

Letter of Instruction: Southern Region.

Use of 1.25 metres as separated protection for WALKING in a position of safety.

Date of Issue 25/05/2022 reviewed and updated 20/10/2023

Purpose

The purpose of this letter of instruction is to clarify the southern region position in relation to the provision of a Safe Work Pack (SWP) and SSOW under the operational hierarchy within the SSOW2.5 system or other similar systems used by contractors to produce Safe Work Packs.

The need for this instruction is driven by the decision to support the expedited delivery of workforce safety benefits resulting from the Track Worker Safety (TWS) Programme. This has resulted in the change in our acceptable working practises and movement away from the use of Lookout Warning Systems whether assisted or unassisted and an Individual Working Alone (IWA) working outside of protection systems.

The instruction addresses two main subjects;

- Identification of the position of safety to be adopted whilst WALKING on or about the line,
- The provision of a documented safe system for WALKING within a Safe Work Pack created by the SSOWPS 2.5 system, in relation to the distance between the nearest open running line and the position of safety whilst WALKING on or about the line.

Scope

The scope of this instruction includes; direct Network Rail staff and contractors working for Wessex, Sussex and Kent Routes, staff and contractors working for any of the Southern Region Directorates including the Director of Engineering, Capital Delivery, Works Delivery and Asset Management (DEAM).

Instruction

Overriding principle for WALKING.

Where there is a requirement to go on or about the line and the requirement involves the need to WALK, a safe system for WALKING can be achieved either;

- within or adjacent to a safeguarded line,
- from a position protected by fenced protection or
- by a minimum distance provided by separated protection.

These levels exist in the operational hierarchy for the activity of working, they will now apply to the activity of WALKING.

Separated protection for WALKING.

When considering what is a suitable position of safety relative to an open running line when WALKING, the only applicable reference can be found in GERT/8000 Handbook 1 which describes a

position of safety as a minimum distance of 1.25 metres from the nearest line on which a train can approach at a line speed of 100mph or under, or 2 metres from the nearest running line on which a train can approach at a line speed of over 100mph.

This principle is to be maintained when considering what is considered to be a separated protection arrangement for WALKING.

Therefore, when planning a safe system of work for WALKING on or about the line that cannot be achieved through safeguarded or fenced arrangements, a minimum separated distance of 1.25 metres (100mph or less) or 2 metres (above 100mph) must apply.

Where two or more individuals under the control of a person in charge (PiC) and COSS are WALKING on or about the line, the SWP must reflect any separate WALKING protection arrangements and this distance must be maintained by the group at all times.

PTS or IWA WALKING on or about the line.

Where a Personal Track Safety (PTS) or Individual Working Alone (IWA) competence holder is WALKING on or about the line and is not subject to the requirements of Clause 4.3. of NR/L2/OHS/019: (*a) when staff are required to undertake work 'on or near the line'; or b) where work has the potential to disrupt or import a risk to the safe running of the operational railway*), there is a requirement to remain at all times in a position of safety at a minimum distance of 1.25 metres from the nearest open line at line speed of 100mph or less or 2 metres at line speeds of above 100mph. Note: an individual PTS holder cannot be issued with a SWP.

Planning and creation of the WALKING component in a SWP.

Where there is a planned WALKING component within a SWP, the planner will select the separated protection arrangements under the operational hierarchy. Although this option was created in the system for selection to support a working activity and for working the separated distance is a minimum of 2 metres, when selected for a WALKING component the minimum separated protection distance required is 1.25 metres.

Compliance to 019 recording information on the Validation Form F01.1 and the SWP.

When completing the Verification (COSS) and Authorising (RM) duties in connection with a SWP, both are required to check any WALKING component reflects the requirements of this instruction.

Additionally, when confirming the safe system used for a WALKING component a PiC must confirm selection of the separated protection for WALKING confirming the minimum distance of 1.25 metres from the nearest running line at line speed of 100mph or less or 2 metres at a line speed of above 100mph.