

## PICOP/HSM Communication and Protocol

**APPLICABLE TO : All PICOP / HSM / Office Staff**

Please see the attached Operational Alert issued from Network Rail, concerning a recent Possession Irregularity, where a train was allowed to run into the section of line where authority had been granted to place protection.

- **Can I remind all of you that undertake PICOP and HSM Duties the importance of using safety critical communications at all times.**
- **You must identify yourself and establish that you are speaking to the correct person, reach a clear and precise understanding between you and the person you are talking to and you repeat it back to them or you get it repeated back to you.**
- **You must use the phonetic alphabet and use individual numbers (ie Two, Seven = 27). Speak clearly and slowly in an even tone.**
- **You must quote each line and all protection points to every signaller when agreeing the possession details.**
- **When you request to take the possession you must, again, quote each line and all protection points to every signaller when agreeing the protection before receiving permission to place you protection from the signallers.**
- **You are only safe to go and place your protection when you have received the instruction from the signaller, and the signaller has specifically stated “You may place your protection for Item xxx between Location and Location on Dn Line between A protection and B protection”. If you have not had this specific instruction, you are not safe to go on the track.**
- **Your voice communications are regularly audited by Network Rail ODMs and Local Operation Managers.**

## T3 Possession Granting Irregularity.



### Communications between Signalboxes during the “Arranging to block the line process”.

## Possession of a running line *for engineering work*

### ***Description of issue identified***

A possession irregularity has occurred in this area where a train was allowed to run into the section of line where authority had been granted to place protection.

The two signallers in adjacent signalboxes individually communicated with the PICOP but failed to communicate with each other to check the arrangements and to ensure all trains had passed clear of the affected area.

This in turn led to a member of staff being put at risk as he placed protection.

### ***What you can do prevent future incidents***

Rule Book instruction T3 regulation 2.3. Is quite clear in that it states:

If another signaller is involved with the possession arrangements, you must:

- tell them what the possession arrangements are
- Get their assurance that they will keep to these arrangements

**This can only be achieved by a telephone call between both signallers where another signalbox controls the entrance or exit signals from a T3 possession.**

Auditing of future communications between signalboxes will be undertaken to ensure these conversations are taking place before permission is given to the PICOP to place protection.

Operational Alert was issued by Philip Vacara, Operations Manager, Wales & Marches, Network Rail

The purpose of this alert is to make signallers and others aware of the causes of operational incidents, and provide guidance for prevention of future incidents.