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# Notifying accidents and incidents

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As a rail licence holder, the [Railways Act 2005](#) requires that you notify the NZ Transport Agency of any serious rail accident or incident as soon as possible by phoning the Rail Safety team on **0508 7245 555**.

What constitutes a serious rail accident or incident is outlined in the 'When to notify' section of this booklet, however if you're not sure we recommend that you phone us anyway.

All notifiable accidents and incidents require a Rail accident/incident notification form to be submitted, regardless of whether you have phoned through the details already. You can find this form on the Transport Agency website.

This booklet outlines what a notifiable incident is, how it is categorised, and explains all the information required from you when completing and submitting a notification form.

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Private Bag 6995  
Wellington 6141

[railregulation@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:railregulation@nzta.govt.nz)



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**The Transport Agency is part of, and contributes to, the Safer Journeys programme.**

Safer Journeys is the government's strategy to guide improvements in road safety over the period 2010-20. The strategy's vision is a safe road system increasingly free of death and serious injury. It is a coordinated effort across partner agencies to improve each aspect of road safety – better behaviours, a safer road environment, safer speeds and higher vehicle standards.

For more information visit [www.transport.govt.nz/saferjourneys](http://www.transport.govt.nz/saferjourneys)

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## What to notify (Page 5)

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## When to notify (Page 8)

This page outlines the time period for when notifications are required.

It also contains descriptions of all of the accidents and incidents that require immediate phone notification.

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## Accident and incident categories (Page 10)

This page contains descriptions of all of the accident and incident categories.

Specific guidance is provided under each category on the information required when submitting a notification form.

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## Glossary (Page 20)

Accidents and incidents are defined a bit differently to normal according to legislation.

All of the terms you need to understand in regards to notifications are outlined on this page.

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## WHO TO NOTIFY

### Transport Agency Rail Safety team

The Transport Agency Rail Safety team receive all accident and incident phone notifications and notification forms. They are contactable 24 hours/7 days by:

- phone on 0508 7245 555, or
- email at [railregulation@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:railregulation@nzta.govt.nz)

You can also contact the team at:

NZ Transport Agency  
Rail Safety Team  
Private Bag 6995  
Wellington 6141

### Rail accident/incident notification form

All notifiable accidents and incidents require a notification form to be submitted to the Transport Agency within three working days.

This form can be accessed via the [Notifying accidents and Incidents](#) section of the Transport Agency website.

### WorkSafe NZ

The Health and Safety at Work Act (2015) (HSWA) requires that WorkSafe is notified if someone becomes seriously ill or is seriously injured as a result of work.

They are contactable by phone on 0800 20 90 20.

For more information about when and how to contact WorkSafe, click the 'Notify WorkSafe' icon on their home page <https://worksafe.govt.nz/>

## WHAT TO NOTIFY

This section provides guidance on the specific information required when making an immediate notification and when submitting a Rail accident/incident notification form to the Rail Safety team.

### Immediate phone notifications

When an accident or significant incident occurs, the Transport Agency must be contacted as soon as practicable on 0508 7245 555 (usually straight after emergency services have been called).

You will generally be prompted, but the information you need to provide includes:

- your name and contact details
- location of incident
- time of incident
- confirmation of any casualties or serious injuries
- brief description of the incident, and
- details of any rail vehicles involved.

### Rail accident/incident notification forms

The accident/incident notification form contains two sections. The first, section A, contains the mandatory fields that must be completed for all notifications (where possible). Section B contains the fields that may be applicable depending on the type of accident/incident and the people/property involved.

#### Section A – Requirements for all notification forms

Section A of the form contains the fields that must be completed for all accidents and incidents. The information required is outlined below.

##### Organisation/licence holder details:

These fields are to confirm the notifying organisation and its up to date contact details.

##### Accident/incident details:

Field	What to provide
Incident category	Click the drop-down menu and select the appropriate category for the incident
Internal incident number/code	The code (if any) used by your organisation to identify the incident
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The location where the accident/incident took place (eg name of station or level crossing, bridge number etc.)</li> <li>• If a rail vehicle (or other mobile plant) is involved and the incident is only detected on arrival at a destination, the location is that arrival point</li> </ul>
Line section ID/name	The line name that identifies the section of track where the accident/incident took place

Metrage	The metrage of the incident where metrage is used by the rail licence holder
Date and time of incident	The date and time the accident/incident took place
Severity rating	Click the drop-down menu and select a rating of 1-4 to indicate the severity of the accident/incident (see table below for guidance)

Severity ratings and descriptions	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All accidents (as defined in the Railways Act 2005)</li> <li>Any incident that causes significant damage to property</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any incident that <b>placed</b> persons at risk of death or serious injury (eg a train passes unauthorised into a section with workers on-track, but stops in time after the driver spots them)</li> <li>Any incident that <b>placed</b> property at risk of significant damage (eg a trackside fire next to a rail vehicle that is extinguished before damage occurs)</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any incident that <b>could have placed</b> persons at risk of death or serious injury (eg a train passes unauthorised into a protected work area, but no one is working at the time)</li> <li>Any incident that <b>could have placed</b> property at risk of significant damage (eg a trackside fire that is extinguished before any rail vehicles enter the area)</li> </ul>
4	When intervention occurred before a potential incident. This rating is used for when you are not sure whether you are required to notify us or not.

#### Accident/incident description:

This free-text field must contain the following:

- a clear and complete description of the incident
- anything known about possible causes of the incident, and
- details specific to the accident/incident category (see Accident and incident categories on page 10 for guidance on how to complete this field).

#### Remedial actions taken:

This free-text field must contain the following:

- any actions that have been taken to prevent a recurrence of the incident, and
- any proposed actions or investigations.

## Section B – Specific notification form requirements

Section B of the form contains the fields that only require completion if applicable. For instance if the incident involved a road vehicle, the fields under 'Road vehicle involved' must be completed.

### Persons involved:

**Note:** This is only completed if a person has been seriously injured or has died.

Field	What to provide
Person type	Click the drop-down menu and select the appropriate option
Fatality or serious injury	Tick the appropriate box

### Rail vehicle involved:

Field	What to provide
Rail vehicle type	Click the drop-down menu and select the appropriate option
Rail vehicle number	The identifying number of the rail vehicle
Train ID	If it is a train, the Train ID
Approximate speed	An estimate of the speed of the rail vehicle
Direction of travel	Whether the vehicle was travelling up or down the line

### Second rail vehicle involved:

Field	What to provide
As above	As above

### Road vehicle involved:

Field	What to provide
Description of vehicle (eg make/model/rego)	Identifying features of the road vehicle involved
Description of damage	A description of the damage, if any, the road vehicle sustained

### Property damage involved:

Field	What to provide
Description of property	Identifying features of the property damaged
Description of damage	A description of the damage incurred, including estimated cost

## WHEN TO NOTIFY

All notifiable accidents and incidents associated with the operation of a rail vehicle, the use of the railway infrastructure or the use of railways premises require a 'Rail accident/incident notification form' to be submitted to the Transport Agency within three days (72 hours).

Prior to that, for all serious accidents and significant incidents, immediate phone notification (as soon as practicable) is required. Details of these types of incidents are provided in the table below.

### Immediate notification requirements

The table below provides details about the incidents that require you to immediately notify the Transport Agency on **0508 7245 555** (after emergency services have been called).

**Note:** Any incident likely to generate immediate or intense public interest or concern should also be notified immediately.

Category	Description(s)
Accident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whenever there is a death or serious injury</li> <li>Any ongoing emergency situation where there is a risk of death or serious injury</li> <li>Whenever there is significant property damage (ie &gt;\$200,000)</li> </ul>
Collision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any collision involving a rail vehicle with passengers on board</li> <li>Any collision involving freight services on the NRS</li> <li>Any collision between a rail vehicle and a road vehicle</li> </ul>
Dangerous goods	All incidents involving the release of dangerous goods
Derailment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Derailments involving any rail vehicle with passengers on board</li> <li>Derailments involving freight services on the NRS</li> </ul>
Fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any fire <b>not</b> caused by a dynamic brake grid</li> <li>Any fire that immobilises a locomotive</li> <li>Any fire, smoke or fume event on a passenger service</li> </ul>
Runaway rail vehicle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partings involving any rail vehicle with passengers on board</li> <li>Partings involving freight services on the NRS</li> </ul>
Safe working rule or procedure breach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any incident where track workers, train control or locomotive engineers failed to adhere to track safety rules and placed persons at risk of serious injury or death</li> <li>Where a movement order has been issued that puts a rail vehicle in conflict with another rail vehicle's authorised route</li> </ul>
SPAD A	Where a rail vehicle has entered a work site without permission

# National Rail System (NRS) notification responsibilities

## Immediate notifications

KiwiRail is responsible for making the immediate notification for accidents and incidents on the controlled network that fall under the requirements listed above.

Rail licence holders are responsible for making the immediate notification within operator controlled territory.

## Follow-up written notifications

After an immediate notification has been made, all follow-up notifications are submitted by the rail licence holder concerned (within three working days).

## Accident and incident notification forms

For notifications without an immediate requirement, KiwiRail are responsible for notifying the following if they occur on the controlled network:

- Track and civil infrastructure irregularities
- Level crossing occurrences
- SPAD Bs
- Signalling and other movement authority systems irregularities.

All other incidents, either on the controlled network or within operator controlled territory, are to be notified by the licence holder concerned.

# ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT CATEGORIES

This section contains a list of all categories accidents and incidents fall into. The category will influence the type of information you need to provide to the Transport Agency.

Under each heading is a description of the category, some examples, and some guidance for completing the 'Accident/incident description' free-text field of the notification form.

A list of the accident and incident categories is provided below. If you're viewing this document on a computer, you can click the category to scroll to the relevant page.

- Collision
- Communications system failure
- Dangerous goods
- Derailment
- Electrical infrastructure irregularity
- Explosion
- Fire
- Level crossing occurrence
- Load irregularity
- Movement authority exceeded
- Rail vehicle irregularity
- Railway security
- Runaway rail vehicle
- Safe working rule or procedure breach
- Signal passed at danger (SPAD)
- Signalling and other movement authority systems irregularity
- Suspected or attempted suicide
- Track and civil infrastructure irregularity
- Train warning and enforcement systems irregularity

## Alcohol or drugs involvement

In post-accident or incident cases where a rail safety worker returns a positive result to an alcohol or drugs test which exceeds approved levels, or the rail safety worker refuses to be tested, some additional information is required.

If the test results are acquired within three days, when submitting a Rail incident/accident notification form, the 'Accident/incident description' field should also include:

- details of the test(s), and
- the position/job role of the affected person.

**Note:** If the results are not available within three days, these details must be emailed to the Transport Agency ([railregulation@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:railregulation@nzta.govt.nz)) when acquired.

## Collision

A collision is when a train or rail vehicle strikes or is struck by another train, rail vehicle, road vehicle, person, rail infrastructure or other obstruction. This category includes collisions with:

- open rail vehicle doors
- a load protruding from a rail vehicle
- bridges, platforms, overhead traction or signalling equipment
- buffer stops
- objects on or foul of track
- animals, and
- vehicles on roadways crossing tramways, where tramways operate on shared roadways.

### Notes:

- For a collision (except train to train) that occurs at a level crossing, see Level crossing occurrence
- For a collision with objects projected at trains, see Railway security
- For a collision that involves suspected or attempted suicide, see Suspected or attempted suicide.

When submitting a Rail incident/accident notification form, the 'Accident/incident description' field should include, where applicable:

- a description of the nature of the collision
- a description of the direction of travel of the train, vehicles and persons involved in the collision
- the best available detail of the chain of events leading to and resulting from the collision, including relevant signal indications or settings, train orders in force, points settings, train control instructions or line side hand signals or other relevant communications.

## Communications system failure

This category involves any deficiency or failure of a communications system (voice or data) that prevents the timely transmission of safety critical information, including

- deficiencies of radio and telephone equipment that prevent transmissions of warnings
- failure of a communication system that prevents transmission of alarms from train monitoring and wayside detectors, and
- failure of a communication system that prevents transmissions of information during emergencies.

**Note:** Communications equipment failures that have no critical effect on the safe operation of a railway (eg where procedures provide for the continuance of safe operations) are not included.

When submitting a Rail incident/accident notification form, the 'Accident/incident description' field should include details of the nature of the failure, including the train operations being carried out.

## Dangerous goods

This category involves any occurrence involving dangerous goods that endangers or has the potential to endanger the safety of railway operations, people and/or premises, including:

- spillage, leakage or emission of dangerous goods
- dangerous goods not loaded in accordance with the Ministry of Transport guidelines and the Land Transport Rule: Dangerous Goods 2005 and amendments.

**Notes:**

- Where the escape of dangerous goods results in a fire or explosion, see Fire or Explosion.
- Where dangerous goods and/or security sensitive dangerous goods are stolen without endangering railway operations and/or premises, see Railway security.

When submitting a Rail incident/accident notification form, the 'Accident/incident description' field should include, where applicable:

- details of the circumstances of the incident, including the chain of events from the loading of the dangerous goods (if on train) to the discovery of their spill/release
- the dangerous goods type
- details of any other containers involved in the occurrence, and
- any fire service incident number (if known).

## Derailment

A derailment is an incident where one or more rail vehicle wheels leave the rail or track during railway operations.

When submitting a Rail incident/accident notification form, the 'Accident/incident description' field should include, where applicable:

- a general description of the derailment including the direction of travel
- the number of derailed wagons and where they were situated in the consist, and
- the best available detail of the chain of events leading to and resulting from the derailment, including any related precursor events already identified (eg natural events that have occurred in the area).

## Electrical infrastructure irregularity

This category involves irregularities in electrical systems or components that result in an electrical accident or endangers or has the potential to endanger the safety of railway operations, people and or/premises, including:

- the fixed electrical equipment of an electrified system
- defects in electrical supply or overhead wiring sufficient to cause an electrical fault
- de-wirement or entanglements of overhead traction equipment (aka downed overhead)
- failure of overhead line equipment
- wiring, other than overhead traction equipment, and
- any other irregularity that causes electric shock.

**Note:** This category does not include:

- a tram trolley pole leaving the wire, unless at a speed that damages overhead infrastructure
- irregularities detected and corrected under normal maintenance
- simple electrical failures like short circuits or tripping of circuit breakers, unless they result in another occurrence such as fire
- occurrences in a depot that do not affect the running line, and
- loss of power from the utility.

When submitting a Rail incident/accident notification form, the 'Accident/incident description' field should include details of the nature of the irregularity, the equipment which has failed or is damaged and the circumstances of its discovery.

## Explosion

An explosion affecting rail infrastructure or a rail vehicle or that has the potential to affect the safety of railway operations, people and /or premises.

When submitting a Rail incident/accident notification form, the 'Accident/incident description' field should include details of the nature of the incident, including where the explosion occurred.

## Fire

A fire affecting rail infrastructure or a rail vehicle which endangers or has the potential to endanger the safety of railway operations, people and/or railway premises, including:

- fires associated with a rail vehicle failure or defect
- where smoke/fumes penetrate passenger accommodation, necessitating evacuation of the passengers from the vehicle(s) concerned where there is no evidence of actual fire
- line side fires, including fires on properties adjacent to the railway
- severe electrical arcing or fusing where there is evidence of fire damage
- dangerous goods fires, and
- fires that lead to railway operations being disrupted or closed as a precautionary measure.

When submitting a Rail incident/accident notification form, the 'Accident/incident description' field should include, where applicable:

- details of the specific area of the train, railway premises, railway infrastructure or other area where the fire occurred (eg terminal, station or passenger coach), and
- an indication as to whether the fire was associated with the operation or movement of a rail vehicle (ie bearing friction fires) or other action (ie rubbish fires in passenger carriages).

## Level crossing occurrence

This category involves collisions of trains or rail vehicles at public or private level crossings, and other occurrences that endanger or have the potential to endanger the safety of railway operations or level crossing operations, including:

- cases of road vehicles causing damage to barriers or other equipment at level crossings
- cases of road vehicles getting stuck (or "grounding out")
- near collision incidents with road vehicles or people at a level crossing
- any case of a train running onto a level crossing when not authorised to do so
- any failure of equipment at a level crossing which could endanger users of the road or path crossing the railway. This includes 'wrong-side' failures of equipment, whether or not any train or crossing user is involved at the time of failure
- incidents which occur during periods of unusual operation (eg when an automatic crossing is operated manually), and
- level crossing occurrences with tramways where trams operate over their exclusive right of way.

### Notes:

- For suspected or attempted suicides at level crossings, see Suspected or attempted suicide.
- Where the occurrence is caused by infrastructure irregularities such as broken rails, welds and bonds that result in the unnecessary operation of crossing protection equipment, see Track and civil infrastructure irregularity.
- For a collision between a tram and a road vehicle, where the tram operates on a roadway, see Collision.

When submitting a Rail incident/accident notification form, the 'Accident/incident description' field should include, where applicable:

- detail of the level crossing occurrence (eg collision with vehicle or person, near collision with vehicle or person, equipment failure, equipment damage or interference)
- detail of the actions taken by the drivers of the train and actions taken, or observed to have been taken, by the road vehicle or pedestrian, including directions of travel
- the nature of the damage or malfunction in the equipment
- an indication as to whether a pedestrian conveyance (eg buggy, wheelchair) was involved
- in the case of a near collision, a clear indication of whether the train driver applied the emergency brake, would have applied the emergency brake if there was time or did not consider it necessary to apply the emergency brake.

**Note:** We also encourage you to submit a [Rail Level Crossing Complaint form](#) to the Police when there is a road vehicle involved, so they can take the appropriate action.

## Load irregularity

This category involves situations where a load endangers or has the potential to endanger the safety of railway operations, persons and/or premises or causes damage, including:

- open or incorrectly secured doors, hatches or fastenings that could result in the loss of load or a collision
- loads that are placed or have moved out of gauge in relation to approved dimensions for the load
- a load that has spilled from a rail vehicle
- uneven distribution of a load on a rail vehicle or in the consist of trains
- chains, ropes, tarpaulins etc. dragging or hanging dangerously, and
- overloading resulting in coupling misalignment.

When submitting a Rail incident/accident notification form, the 'Accident/incident description' field should include, where applicable:

- details of the circumstances of the irregularity, describing the chain of events from loading to discovery, and
- the type of load or container.

## Movement authority exceeded

Movement authority exceeded occurs when a train exceeds the limits of authorised movements and there is no signal system in place (ie not a SPAD incident), including at locations such as stop boards and limit boards.

When submitting a Rail incident/accident notification form, the 'Accident/incident description' field should include, where applicable:

- details of the nature of the authority exceeded incident
- the distance (in metres) which the front of the train travels beyond its limit, and
- the type of action, or absence of action, taken by the driver (see the table in Signal passed at danger (SPAD)).

## Rail vehicle irregularity

This category involves any rail vehicle irregularity that endangers or has the potential to endanger the safety of railway operations and/or people, including:

- wheel, axle or bearing failures while a rail vehicle is in service
- braking system failures
- faulty passenger train doors that haven't been or can't be isolated
- faulty fire detection equipment
- dragging or loose rail vehicle equipment or components
- severe electrical arcing or fusing
- vehicle structural defects
- faulty design, construction or operation of a rail vehicle
- locomotive remote controlling equipment irregularities, and
- an irregularity that causes electric shock.

This category excludes:

- any irregularity detected and corrected during a normal maintenance programme, and
- failure of a locomotive or multiple unit train that does not affect the safety of railway operations.

**Note:** If the irregularity involves on-track equipment for automatic train protection or warning system equipment, see Train warning and enforcement systems irregularity.

When submitting a Rail incident/accident notification form, the 'Accident/incident description' field should include, where applicable:

- details of the nature of the irregularity, the rail vehicle component which has failed or is damaged, and
- the circumstances of the irregularity's discovery.

## Railway security

This category involves any unlawful activity on railway property that endangers or has the potential to endanger the safety of railway operations, people and or/premises, including:

- train surfing
- near collisions with trespassers
- objects being projected at trains
- assaults on railway premises
- theft of safety related materials or equipment
- theft of dangerous goods and/or security-sensitive goods, and
- acts of vandalism or sabotage.

**Note:** This category does not include trespassing stock or people where no near-collision occurred.

When submitting a Rail incident/accident notification form, the 'Accident/incident description' field should include, where applicable:

- details of the circumstances of the breach, the behaviour of perpetrators and any actions taken by staff
- a description of where the activity occurred, generally one of:
  - on a train
  - on a platform
  - other location, with a description

- an indication as to whether the breach was associated with or caused a near miss
- in the case of a projectile, a description of the object thrown or otherwise cast (eg slingshot, firearm etc) at trains and advice on whether the train was struck, and
- in the case of theft, a description of the safety-related (or other) materials or equipment and the implications of this theft.

## Runaway rail vehicle

This category involves the uncontrolled movement of an unattended train or rail vehicle that endangers or has the potential to endanger the safety of railway operations.

**Note:** This includes train partings.

When submitting a Rail incident/accident notification form, the 'Accident/incident description' field should include:

- details of the circumstances of the runaway
- the extent of runaway, and
- the actions taken to manage the incident.

## Safe working rule or procedure breach

This category involves any breach of an operational safe working system or procedure that endangers or has the potential to endanger the safety of railway operations and/or persons, including:

- human failures (intentional and unintentional acts) in the application of safe working procedures
- failure to communicate or act on vital information to protect trains and personnel
- failure to comply with a hand signal
- irregularities in the management of train separation (eg a near miss), and
- any significant breach of a rail operator's or access provider's rule.

**Notes:**

- System failures identified as part of standard inspection and maintenance programs are not incidents
- Where the breach involves SPADs and movement authority exceedances, see Signal passed at danger (SPAD) or Movement authority exceeded as appropriate.

When submitting a Rail incident/accident notification form, the 'Accident/incident description' field should include, where applicable:

- details of the circumstances of the rule breach or deficiency
- identification of the appropriate track work or safe working procedure or rule, and
- where associated with a train control system, a description of the type of system in force.

## Signal passed at danger (SPAD)

A SPAD is where a train passes, without authority, a signal displaying a stop indication, including:

- signals blacked out, and
- track warrant overruns on the National Rail System.

A category 'A' SPAD (or SPAD A) is where the stop signal indication (and any associated preceding indication) was displayed correctly and in sufficient time for the train to be stopped safely.

When submitting a Rail incident/accident notification form, the 'Accident/incident description' field should include, where applicable:

- detail of the nature of the SPAD, including SPAD type (refer to the [Australasian SPAD classifications](#))
- the distance (in metres) which the front of the train travels beyond the signal, and
- the type of action, or absence of action, taken by the driver, as per the table below.

Action	Description
Signal restored as train approached	Where a proceed signal changes to stop in the face of the driver giving insufficient time for the train to brake to a stop prior to passing the signal
Driver misjudged	Where the driver has attempted to stop the train but failed to stop the train before passing the signal for whatever reason
Completely missed while running	Where no attempt has been made to bring a train to a stand before the stop signal and the train has proceeded into the next section or block without the necessary authority. The driver has not realised that the train has passed a stop signal until a more serious event results; the driver is stopped by train control over the radio, at the next signal or stopped by other external intervention
Starting against signal	Where a stationary train starts and proceeds beyond a signal at danger without authority. The driver may or may not realise that the train has run past the signal
Automatic intervention	Where the train was brought to a stop past a signal through intervention from an automatic train protection system

## Signalling and other movement authority systems irregularity

This category involves any failure in the signalling system or equipment that endangers, or has the potential to endanger the safety of railway operations, including:

- wrong-side failures of vital signalling, points operating and train detection equipment
- malfunction of point detection circuits
- failure of control systems and equipment, including on-board systems and equipment (eg ETCS)
- failures of token based systems and equipment, and
- failures of equipment and aids of manual or electronic train authority systems.

### Notes:

- A 'wrong-side failure' is considered to have the potential to endanger the safety of railway operations if it was not detected by other parts of the signalling system AND had at least one of the following consequences:
  - it caused a signal to display an aspect less restrictive than the proper one or it prevented a signal from displaying a more restrictive aspect
  - it resulted in incorrect operation of the interlocking
  - the presence or location of trains is not detected
  - the train crew obtained an erroneous authority due to malfunctioning of the applicable control system or components thereof.

- 'Equipment' refers to hardware and software. For failure of equipment at a level crossing, see Level crossing occurrence.
- Where signals operated correctly, as designed, and displaying a 'stop' or 'danger' indication because of a broken rail, weld, bond wire or other infrastructure defect or an occupied block, see Track and civil infrastructure irregularity.
- For procedural safe working failures, see Safe working rule or procedure breach.
- For misalignment of point, broken or damaged points blade or components (eg spreader bars and brackets), or other damage caused by trailing or 'run throughs', see Track and civil infrastructure irregularity.

When submitting a Rail incident/accident notification form, the 'Accident/incident description' field should include, where applicable:

- identification of the equipment or system that fails and the circumstances of that failure, and
- a description of the type of train control system in force.

## Suspected or attempted suicide

Any confirmed, suspected or attempted suicide, including people:

- struck by a train
- jumping from railway structure, or
- jumping from a structure onto railway property.

**Note:** Any incident reported under this category is based on reasonable judgement from the information available. It does not pre-empt or rely on coronial decisions.

When submitting a Rail incident/accident notification form, the 'Accident/incident description' field should include details of the nature of the incident, including the behaviour of the person which supports the determination of attempted suicide.

## Track and civil infrastructure irregularity

This category involves any irregularity in the track or civil infrastructure that endangers, or has the potential to endanger, the safety of railway operations, persons and/or premises, including:

- broken rail, being a fracture of the rail in a running line including a broken joint or weld, or detachment of a piece from the rail which necessitates an immediate stoppage of traffic or the immediate imposition of a speed restriction lower than that already in force
- misalignment of track (such as a buckle) on a running line involving either horizontal or vertical misalignment which results in an immediate stoppage of traffic or the immediate imposition of a speed restriction lower than that already in force
- spread track, being any spread of track, in a running line, beyond approved gauge tolerances that results in an immediate stoppage of traffic or other restrictions
- track obstructions, being any object or damage that blocks or interferes with the track and civil infrastructure
- failure of, or damage to, rail infrastructure, such as a tunnel, bridge, viaduct, culvert, station, or other structure or any part thereof
- damage to bridges and barriers by road vehicles, and
- damage to infrastructure caused by interference.

### Notes:

- Irregularities detected and corrected under normal inspection and maintenance are not incidents.

- For signalling and electrical infrastructure irregularities, see Signalling and other movement authority systems irregularity.
- Where the irregularity involves damage to any railway equipment at a level crossing (eg level crossing barriers, signalling equipment), see Level crossing occurrence.

When submitting a Rail incident/accident notification form, the 'Accident/incident description' field should include, where applicable:

- details of the nature of the irregularity, the component which has failed or is damaged
- the method or manner in which the irregularity was detected, and
- in the case of an obstruction, the type of obstruction.

## Train warning and enforcement systems irregularity

Any failure of installed train monitoring, warning and enforcement systems to detect and act on alarm situations, including:

- failures of installed systems such as ETCS, train stops, and vigilance systems to stop trains in potentially dangerous situations
- failure, bypassing or non-availability of rail vehicle location technology that could have placed people or infrastructure at risk
- isolation of the above systems or parts of such systems to enable train operations to continue in cases where the equipment malfunctions
- failure of equipment such as acoustic bearing detectors to detect defects on the passing train
- failure of out of gauge detectors and weighbridges to detect load irregularities
- failure of dragging equipment detectors
- failure of track flood warning, rock slide detection and other installed infrastructure monitoring systems to detect unsafe conditions, and
- failure of personal and fixed gas detectors.

### Notes:

- This category does not include failures that have no critical effect on the safe operation of the railway (eg where procedures provide for the continuance of safe operations).
- If the irregularity involves a failure of the communications system link, see Communications system failure.

When submitting a Rail incident/accident notification form, the 'Accident/incident description' field should include, where applicable:

- details of the nature of the irregularity, including the train operations being carried out and the resulting consequences (if any), and
- a description of the type of warning or enforcement system in place at the time of the incident.

# GLOSSARY

This page clarifies the terms used within this section of the website. These definitions are in line with [Section 4 of the Railways Act 2005](#) (the Act), where applicable.

**Note:** This doesn't include definitions of the accident and incident categories. These are contained in the Accident and incident categories section on page 10.

## Accident

According to the Act, the term 'accident' refers only to serious events, which means all rail accidents require immediate notification. The definition is provided below:

An **accident** means an occurrence associated with the operation of a rail vehicle or the use of railway infrastructure or railway premises that causes:

- the death of, or serious injury to, individuals, or
- significant damage to property.

## Contractor

A person, and any employee of that person, who has a contract of service to carry out work for a rail participant and is carrying out that work.

## Incident

An **incident** means an occurrence, other than an accident, that is associated with the operation of a rail vehicle or the use of railway infrastructure or railway premises that placed, or could have placed:

- a person at risk of death or serious injury, or
- property at risk of significant damage.

## Level crossing

A level crossing is an area where a road and a railway meet at substantially the same level, whether or not there is a level crossing sign on the road at all or any of the entrances to the area.

## Metrage

Metrage is marked out by trackside pegs every kilometre and every half kilometre, and is used as a way of communicating the track location of features such as culverts, train signals or track faults. Metrage is measured and read in kilometres.

## Passenger

A person travelling or intending to travel on a train, including:

- before and after travel, but while on railway premises, irrespective of whether they have a valid authority to travel
- an employee travelling while not on duty
- a person boarding or alighting from a train, and
- a person travelling without a valid ticket.

## 'Placed' vs. 'Could have placed'

Distinguishes how close an incident was to potentially injuring someone or damaging property:

- **Placed:** People or property avoided harm only through luck and/or emergency action (eg a train passes unauthorised into a section with workers on-track, but stops in time after the driver spots them).
- **Could have placed:** People or property avoided imminent harm because further preventative safety controls intervened (eg in-service failure of a safety-critical component but further safety controls were available).

## Public

In relation to an accident or incident, public refers to any person affected who is not rail personnel, a passenger or a trespasser.

## Near collision

Any occurrence where the driver of a moving train or rail vehicle, takes emergency action, or would have if there was sufficient time, to avoid impact with a person, vehicle or other obstruction and no collision occurred. Emergency action includes continuous audible warning and/or brake application.

## Rail activity

The rail activities of a rail participant, or for which a rail participant is responsible, are as follows:

- in the case of an infrastructure owner, the ownership of railway infrastructure
- in the case of a rail vehicle owner, the ownership and management of rail vehicles
- in the case of a railway premises owner, the ownership and maintenance of railway premises (whether or not the railway premises owner is also a maintenance provider)
- in the case of an access provider, the operation and maintenance of all railway infrastructure that is, or relates to, the railway lines controlled by the access provider (whether or not the access provider is also an infrastructure owner, maintenance provider, or network controller)
- in the case of a rail operator, the operation and maintenance of rail vehicles (whether or not the rail operator is also a rail vehicle owner or maintenance provider)
- in the case of a maintenance provider, the maintenance of any railway infrastructure or rail vehicles or railway premises
- in the case of a railway premises manager, the management and operation of railway premises
- in the case of a network controller, the authorisation of rail vehicles occupying or moving on a railway line, and
- in the case of a class of person prescribed as a rail participant by regulations, the activities prescribed by regulations as being the rail activities of persons of that class.

## Rail participant

A rail participant means any of the following:

- an infrastructure owner
- a rail vehicle owner
- a railway premises owner
- an access provider
- a rail operator
- a network controller
- a maintenance provider
- a railway premises manager
- any other class of person prescribed as a rail participant by regulations.

## Rail personnel

Rail personnel, in relation to a rail participant, means an individual engaged by the rail participant or by an agent or contractor of the rail participant, whether as an employee, agent, contractor, or volunteer, for the purposes of carrying out, or assisting in carrying out, rail activities of the rail participant.

## Rail vehicle (aka rolling stock)

Means any vehicle that runs on, or uses, a railway line, including:

- a locomotive, rail carriage, rail wagon, railcar, light rail vehicle, rail maintenance vehicle (whether or not self-propelled), and any other vehicle prescribed as a rail vehicle by regulations, and
- a vehicle designed to operate both on rails and off rails, but only when that vehicle is running on rails.

## Railway infrastructure

Railway infrastructure means:

- railway lines
- rail traffic control equipment
- communications equipment
- electrical traction equipment, and
- any other property specified as railway infrastructure in regulations.

## Road vehicle

A vehicle or any device in, on, or by which any person or property is permitted to be transported on a public or private roadway.

## Serious injury

Serious injuries are also known as 'notifiable injuries'. [Section 23 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#) defines a notifiable injury as:

- any of the following injuries or illnesses that require the person to have immediate treatment (other than first aid):
  - the amputation of any part of his or her body
  - a serious head injury
  - a serious eye injury
  - a serious burn
  - the separation of his or her skin from an underlying tissue (such as degloving or scalping)
  - a spinal injury
  - the loss of a bodily function
  - serious lacerations
- an injury or illness that requires, or would usually require, the person to be admitted to a hospital for immediate treatment
- an injury or illness that requires, or would usually require, the person to have medical treatment within 48 hours of exposure to a substance.

## Severity rating

The severity rating of an incident influences the priority for assessment and investigation. See the 'What to notify' section for the severity classification table.

## Significant damage

When the damage caused by an incident is estimated to be more than \$200,000.

## Significant incident

Any incident that had a very high potential to cause multiple casualties or significant damage to property.

## Train

One or more rail vehicles coupled together, at least one of which is a locomotive or other self-propelled unit that is designed to be operated on a railway.

Train type	Definition
Freight train	A train that is designed and used for carrying freight, whether or not it is carrying freight at the time of an occurrence
Metro passenger train	A passenger train that primarily travels within designated metropolitan areas
Non-metro passenger train	A passenger train that travels outside designated metropolitan areas
Tourist and heritage passenger train	A passenger train operated by a designated tourist and heritage rail operator
Track maintenance train	A type of train that is designed and used for track inspection and maintenance work
Tram	A specific type of passenger train running on rails that includes being laid in a public road

## Traction type

This is the type of power unit providing motive power to the train, for instance electric, diesel, steam or man-powered.

## Trespasser

A person who is on railway infrastructure, railway premises or rail vehicles, whether intentionally or negligently, with no right or authority to be there.

Examples include a person:

- with an intention to commit suicide
- travelling in a place not authorised for their use (eg outside trains)
- who uses, without authority, a recognised 'staff only' crossing at a station (eg a staff foot crossing)
- who acts in disobedience of warning signs or signals, or strays away from the normal route of the level crossing
- crossing the track anywhere other than at an authorised crossing point
- electrocuted while dangling or throwing objects from a position on non-railway property onto overhead line equipment, conductor rails at bridges etc.

- who falls or jumps from a station platform , unless the person did not have an intent to fall or jump (in which case they should be treated as a 'passenger', 'employee' or 'public')
- on railway premises with an intention to carry out illegal activities
- carrying out maintenance or construction activity without a permit to do so.

## **Volunteer**

A person who undertakes railway work for a rail participant on a voluntary or unpaid basis and is carrying out that work.

## **Wrong- side failure**

A wrong-side failure describes a failure condition in a piece of railway signalling equipment that results in an unsafe state. A typical example would be a signal showing a 'proceed' aspect (eg green) when it should be showing a 'stop' or 'danger' aspect.