

Fire and Rescue NSW Operations Bulletin 2012/01 Entering the rail corridor



Issue

A recent incident required emergency services personnel to enter the rail corridor, which led to a serious near miss involving a high-speed train. This bulletin outlines the procedure for entering the rail corridor and applies at all rail corridors managed by rail authorities within NSW.

Background

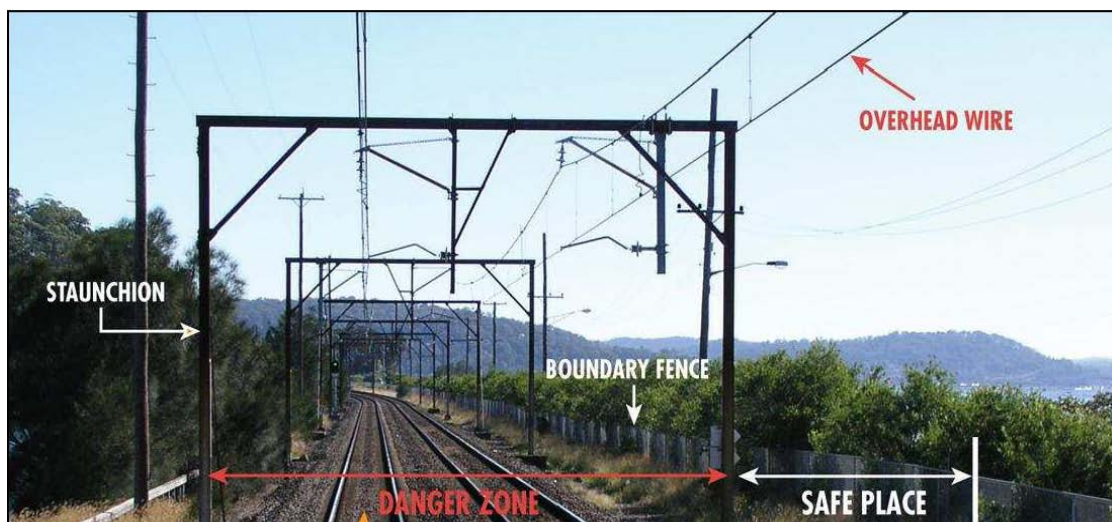
The rail authorities within NSW are:

- *RailCorp* – which operates CityRail (where there are electrified overhead lines) and the Bomaderry line.
- *Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC)* and *John Holland* – which operate all other rail, except some privately-owned lines.

The rail authorities use the term *rail corridor* to define the overall area containing the rail infrastructure within the boundary fences, or if there are no fences, within 15 metres measured from the outside rails.

The rail corridor has two main sections:

- *Danger zone* – everywhere within 3 metres from the nearest rail, including all tunnels, bridges, viaducts, and cuttings.
- *Safe place* – a place where people and equipment cannot be struck by passing rail traffic.



RailCorp rail corridors are locked and entry is via an access gate. Each access gate has a unique gate location number.



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Limited access

Due to the hazards present in the rail corridor, the rail authorities do not allow anyone, including emergency services personnel, to enter the rail corridor without their permission.

FRNSW can request access via our Communication Centre (ComCen). The ComCen contacts the Rail Management Centre (RMC) who notify the relevant rail authority.

The rail authorities authorise entry when they are satisfied that there are adequate safety precautions in place. This includes sending a rail representative onsite, where possible, to accompany the crew, and advising train drivers of the presence of emergency service personnel. Where access is required to the danger zone, trains are stopped.

If access is required within the safe work distance of overhead power lines, a Rescue Power Outage (RPO) to temporarily remove power from the overhead lines must be requested via the ComCen. They will arrange an RPO with the RMC and an RPO number will be issued to confirm the outage. See Operations Bulletin 2009/02, [Removing power from RailCorp overhead power lines](#).

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1. Contact the ComCen and request entry to the rail corridor. Advise the nature of access required – ie to the safe place only or into the danger zone. Also, if requesting entry to a RailCorp corridor, advise your gate location. The ComCen will contact the RMC to obtain authorisation.
2. Wait for advice and authorisation from the RMC, via the ComCen, on how to proceed. The RMC will advise:
 - Whether a rail representative will attend and their estimated time of arrival.
 - Where to stage vehicles prior to entry.
 - When the trains have been stopped and it is safe for you to enter the danger zone. Also, where there is more than one rail line, on **which lines** trains have been stopped.
3. Once authorisation is received to enter, do so with caution. Wear reflective outer garments, either structural firefighting or bushfire PPC. Lock any access gates behind you when entering and leaving. Ensure that the appliance warning lights are on while you are in the rail corridor. Regularly update the RMC via the ComCen.



WARNING

If trains have been stopped it does not necessarily mean that power to the overhead wiring has been removed. Treat overhead wiring as live unless an RPO has been issued and confirmed by an RPO number.

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4. If, due to an immediate threat to life or property, you need to enter the rail corridor *before the rail representative arrives*, contact the ComCen and advise them of the circumstances and your Incident Action Plan.
5. Once operations are complete and personnel and equipment are clear of the rail corridor, **ensure** the RMC is advised via the ComCen, so that rail services can resume as soon as possible.

Contact officer: A/Supt Christopher Sedgwick, Acting Manager Operational Information, (02) 9265 2614, Christopher.Sedgwick@fire.nsw.gov.au

	A	B	C	D	Other
Noted: Station Commander					
Checked: Duty Commander					

Previous Operations Bulletin: 2011/03, *Foam aeration tubes*