



Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd

# SAFETY ALERT



ARTC Victoria No. 65

Issued 16/09/2013

## Track Force Protection – Country Regions and Communications

### Background

This Safety Alert has been issued after an incident involving a near miss with a passenger train and track maintenance machine (excavator).

The work area was over a number of kilometres and involved multiple work groups being managed by a single Track Force Protection Coordinator (TFPC) and a Work Group Supervisor (WGS). Miscommunications between the TFPC and WGS and the Excavator operator resulted in the excavator occupying the track prior to the train clearing the work site and protection being in place.

### Action Required

1. Rule 3 Track Force Protection – Country Regions Section 15 Infrastructure Works states that:  
*“Protection must be provided prior to any obstruction being placed upon a running line.”*  
This requires that the TFPC must ensure that there are **no** trains within the limits of the work site and protection is in place before authorising occupation of the running line.
2. Rail Safety Workers must ensure the following Communications Protocols are used on the ARTC Network:
  - a) Communication equipment used for rail traffic operation or work on track **must** be tested and checked for its intended operation.
  - b) Communication in the Network must be:
    - clear, brief and unambiguous,
    - relevant to the task at hand, and
    - agreed as to its meaning before being acted upon.
  - c) Communications must begin with the **identification** of the **receiver**, followed by the **identification** of the **sender**.
  - d) The receiver must confirm the content of a message by repeating the message back to the sender, if the communication is about an Occupancy Authority, an instruction not to proceed, or obstructing the running line.
  - e) If the meaning of a spoken communication is not understood the receiver must ask that it be repeated, or the receiver must try again as soon as practicable, or arrange alternative means to communicate with the sender.

**Rail Safety Workers must not assume that a receiver has understood a message without the receiver confirming that the message has been understood.**

Infrastructure Managers and Contractor Companies must ensure that all Rail Safety Workers who access the ARTC rail corridor are aware of, understand, and apply these requirements.

This Safety Alert **MUST** be displayed in the workplace.