



Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd

# SAFETY ALERT

ARTC NSW No. 41



Issued 24/06/10

## ARTC Network Rules and Procedures

### ANWT 308 Controlled Signal Blocking and ANPR 703 Working Using Controlled Signal Blocking

**NOTE:** This Safety Alert does not contain amendments to the relevant Rule and Procedure and is an advice to ARTC Network users following the issue of a Rail Industry Safety Notice by the Independent Transport Safety and Reliability Regulator (ITSRR).

#### **Background**

At approximately 0108hrs on 13 April 2010, a rail maintenance worker was fatally injured when struck by a passenger train at Kogarah in Sydney's southern suburbs. The method of protection being applied was Controlled Signal Blocking (CSB). This incident is under investigation.

The hazards of working in the rail corridor are well understood and the Network Rules exist to control risk. Accordingly the Independent Transport Safety and Reliability Regulator (ITSRR) issued a safety notice (Rail Industry Safety Notice RISN 30 – see <http://www.transportregulator.nsw.gov.au/publications/RISN/RISN30.pdf>) to remind all railway operators that the Signaller and the Protection Officer **must** share communication to confirm that the correct signal(s) have been placed to STOP with blocking facilities applied and that there is no rail traffic between the protecting signal(s) and the worksite.

The term 'Signaller' covers all job titles which may be performing the duties of Signaller for the location, for example, Area Controller and Network Controller.

#### **The rule requirement**

ARTC Network Rule ANWT 308 states that at the request of a Protection Officer, the Signaller may authorise controlled signal blocking by:

- setting and keeping controlled signals at STOP with blocking facilities applied to the signal controls, or
- authorising the removal of an ESML handle to set controlled signals at STOP.



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The rule further states the following:

A Signaller may authorise controlled signal blocking only for signals in their area of control.

Before setting controlled signals at STOP, the Signaller must speak to the *Train Controller* about the request to exclude rail traffic.

Before work starts, the Protection Officer must confirm from the Signaller that:

- the controlled signals have been set at STOP with blocking facilities applied, and
- there is no rail traffic approaching the worksite.

### **The procedure requirement**

ARTC Network Procedures ANPR703 states that the Protection Officer must:

10. Before work begins, confirm with the Signaller that:
  - signals have been set at STOP and blocking facilities applied, and
  - there is no rail traffic in the area between the controlled signals being used for protection and the workers.

The Rule and Procedure make it clear that while the Signaller has the initial responsibility for these actions, the Protection Officer has a separate responsibility to “confirm” with the Signaller that the actions have in fact been taken.

This responsibility requires specific and explicit action by the Protection Officer. The Protection Officer must ask for and receive *explicit* confirmation of the required actions have been taken in *both* the categories shown as dot points above.

### **Action**

Signallers / Network Controllers must be informed, that they must take initial responsibility for placing the required signal(s) at stop with blocking facilities applied *and* for checking that there is no rail traffic between the signal(s) and the worksite, *but the process under the Rules and Procedures is not complete until the Protection Officer has obtained specific confirmation of **both** these aspects*. Similarly, Protection Officers must understand that they must obtain specific confirmation of both these aspects, *and must not allow work to take place until confirmation has been received*.

- **All Managers must advise and discuss with all employees / alliance partners / contractors under your control this Safety Alert**
- **Place the Safety Alert on display**
- **Ensure a “sign-off” (for example, a Team Safety Meeting record) is obtained to verify that employees have been briefed on this Safety Alert**