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NATIONAL CONTROL INSTRUCTIONS

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Issue: 4

Date: 05 March 2016

ADDITIONAL TRACK ACCESS (VSTP)

1 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this National Control Instruction is to make certain that all relevant information and restrictions have been considered before additional track access is granted to a bid from an operator outside train planning timescales. Without this being completed and valid schedules for the services being produced:

- a) a train will not have a consist which causes operating difficulties and may have safety of the line implications e.g. if it sets off a Hot Axle Box Detector or carries dangerous goods;
- b) the signaller will not know how to route the train which is especially relevant for traffic with route or operating restrictions;
- c) the Train Operator will not be charged for track access, as the billing system is driven off data from TRUST.

2 SCOPE

2.1 This National Control Instruction provides the approach to be applied when changes to the train plan are necessary at short notice and additional track access (VSTP) is required.

2.2 Application of the process is undertaken by controllers within Network Rail Route Controls and representatives within Freight and Train Operating Companies.

3 REFERENCE DOCUMENTATION

- Network Code
- Network Rail Performance Manual – Part b (Performance Measurement Process)
- GO/RT3407 – Exceptional Loads Documentation
- NR/L3/OCS/043/Form F4.3A – Additional Track Access (VSTP) Request Form

4 SHORT NOTICE ACCESS (VSTP – Very Short Term Planning)

4.1 Changes to the train plan may still be required after train planning timescales are concluded. These requests fall into the VSTP category and are processed by the Network Rail Route Control.

Any bid for additional track access for 'Day C' submitted to Network Rail after 10:00 hours on 'Day A' is considered to have been made during the VSTP period (where 'Day C' is the day the train is due to run (depart), 'Day B' is one day before the train is due to run and 'Day A' is two days before the train is due to run). However 'Day A' cannot fall on a Saturday or a Sunday and 'Day B' cannot fall on a Sunday.

Capacity Planning will advise Route Controls of any rejected schedules and the reasons why they were rejected to prevent inappropriate use of the VSTP procedure.

In an Integrated Control Centre (ICC), additional passenger services required by the Lead Train Operator shall be verbally agreed by the Train Running Controller, who shall create the schedule and make a suitable log entry. A VSTP request form is not required.

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In all other circumstances an operator requiring additional track access shall do so by completing [NR/L3/OCS/043/F4.3A](#) – **Additional Track Access (VSTP) Request Form** and sending it to the necessary Network Rail Route Control.

Additional track access shall not be granted unless all necessary parts of the form have been completed by the requesting operator.

4.2

Should an operator submit an incomplete form then the Network Rail Route Control shall reject the request and inform the operator of the reason for the rejection.

4.3

An operator should give as much notice as possible to the Network Rail Route Control to allow enough time to respond to the VSTP request; this should be at least an hour for simple or single route requests or 2-hours for requests that cross route boundaries. This is particularly relevant for bids where the schedule involves crossing multiple routes.

On receipt of a VSTP request the Route Control shall respond to the bid within 60 minutes to confirm with the operator whether access can be granted, or to confirm receipt for a bid later that day and give confirmation when a decision will be reached. Trains shall not be granted access to the infrastructure without a valid schedule, though in certain situations this is not practicable and the restriction can be waived by Network Rail Route Control (e.g. 1Z99 rescue engine required to assist a failure).

The Network Rail Route Control shall liaise with operators, signal boxes and other control centres in instances where drivers may be looking for access to the infrastructure before the schedule can be created.

In the event that additional track access is required through the VSTP process then Figure 1 shall be applied: