



Rail Safety & Standards Board

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**Guidance on Recording and Monitoring of Spoken Safety
Communications**

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Documents

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Guidance on Recording and Monitoring of Spoken Safety Communications

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Guidance on Recording and Monitoring of Spoken Safety Communications

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Guidance on Recording and Monitoring of Spoken Safety Communications

Part 1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this document

- 1.1.1 The benefits arising from recording spoken safety communications were identified in the Uff Inquiry, where Recommendation 19 stated that 'Appropriate procedures for receiving and making an automatic record of verbal reports should exist in all control centres'. Since 1998 the use of recording equipment as a means of evidence preservation in the event of an incident has become widespread in signal boxes and control centres. Further benefits have been the ability to use voice recording equipment as a key element within competency management systems, and the development of joint monitoring exercises between infrastructure managers and railway undertakings, with the objective of raising standards in verbal communication. This is particularly important where safety critical staff are giving and receiving safety messages.
- 1.1.2 This guidance document is therefore intended to assist infrastructure managers and railway undertakings in understanding and meeting their responsibilities in relation to the recording and monitoring of spoken safety communications, ie to:
- a) monitor and review spoken safety communications to ensure that the required standards of communication are achieved
 - b) collect and preserve voice recording evidence following an accident or incident.

It does not constitute a recommended method of meeting any set of mandatory requirements.

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1.3 Approval and authorisation of this document

The content of this document has been approved by:

TOM Standards Committee on 29 April 2008.

This document has been authorised by RSSB on 18 June 2008.

Guidance on Recording and Monitoring of Spoken Safety Communications

Part 2 Guidance on Recording and Monitoring of Spoken Safety Communications

2.1 Guidance to infrastructure managers and railway undertakings on routine monitoring of spoken safety communications

2.1.1 General arrangements for access to recordings

- 2.1.1.1 Infrastructure managers and railway undertakings should compile lists of all locations where voice recording equipment is installed, and share this information with each other to facilitate joint monitoring.
- 2.1.1.2 Infrastructure managers and railway undertakings should make access to voice recordings available to nominated representatives from other such organisations upon reasonable request and subject to reasonable notice being given.
- 2.1.1.3 Consideration should be given to developing and documenting contingency arrangements to ensure that voice recording of spoken safety communications can be maintained in cases where the normal recording media is not available, for example arising from planned or emergency relocation of signalling and control centres.

2.1.2 Monitoring of individuals

- 2.1.2.1 Nominated managers should establish plans to monitor voice recordings of staff required to undertake spoken safety communications. Appendix A provides information on how assessments may be carried out, and includes a template monitoring form listing suggested criteria against which monitoring and assessment may take place.
- 2.1.2.2 Planned monitoring of each individual carrying out safety critical tasks should be carried out at least once in every competency assessment cycle. Where an individual is assessed as being at greater risk, for example those newly appointed or with a history of poor quality communication, more frequent monitoring should be considered.
- 2.1.2.3 Voice media evidence of this assessment should be retained until a new competency assessment cycle begins.
- 2.1.2.4 This proactive monitoring may use information from a number of different sources and should include both announced and unannounced monitoring.
 - a) Announced monitoring should consider:
 - i) workplace visits
 - ii) analysis of voice recordings.

The effect of the presence of an assessor on spoken safety communication behaviours should be considered.

- b) Unannounced monitoring should consider the analysis of voice recordings or the monitoring of radio channels, where this is possible.

Information from both sources should be used to support competence assessments.

- 2.1.2.5 Particular attention should be paid to the spoken safety communications performance of new staff, utilising announced and unannounced monitoring. It is important that any deviations from training and competence models are identified as soon as possible to reduce the likelihood of perpetuating communications errors. Therefore it is suggested that additional assessments are conducted on new staff.