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Guidance for Safe Freight Train Operation
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Documents

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Guidance for Safe Freight Train Operation

Issue record

Issue	Date	Comments
One	April 2010	Original document
Two	March 2013	Replaces issue one This issue incorporates the former contents of Section G of GO/RM3056 Working Manual for Rail Staff: Freight Train Operations. Some clauses have been reworded to improve their clarity. Changes made to GE/RT8000 Rule Book Module TW1 with regard to the requirement for the brakes to be operative on the rear vehicle, previously the rear three vehicles, are reflected in this guidance note.
Three	December 2014	Replaces issue two. Some clauses have been withdrawn as they contain no additional guidance beyond the mandatory requirements in GO/RT3056 Working Manual for Rail Staff: Freight Train Operations. The term 'loading gauge' was amended to 'vehicle gauge', to align with the terminology used as set out in Railway Group Standards. There were also some minor editorial changes.

Amended or additional parts of revised pages have been marked by a vertical black line in the adjacent margin.

Superseded documents

The following Railway Group documents are superseded, either in whole or in part as indicated:

Superseded documents	Sections superseded	Date when sections are superseded
GO/GN3653 Guidance for Safe Freight Train Operation, issue two	All	06 December 2014

Supply

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Part 1 Introduction

G 1.1 Purpose of this document

- G 1.1.1 This document gives guidance on safe freight train operation. This guidance is intended to assist infrastructure managers and railway undertakings in understanding their responsibilities in relation to safe freight train operation. It does not constitute a recommended method of meeting any set of mandatory requirements.

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G 1.3 Approval and authorisation of this document

- G 1.3.1 The content of this document was approved by Traffic Operation and Management Standards Committee on 14 October 2014.
- G 1.3.2 This document was authorised by RSSB on 31 October 2014.

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Part 2 General Guidance

G 2.1 Provision of information

G 2.1.1 Purpose

- G 2.1.1.1 The safe and effective operation of freight trains requires clear and accurate information to be exchanged between infrastructure managers, railway undertakings and anyone involved in the loading, preparation and operation of vehicles or trains.
- G 2.1.1.2 Staff involved in the operation of freight trains will require sufficient information to make sure they clearly understand vehicle design and operation, loading capacity, loading requirements and any special operating restrictions that exist.
- G 2.1.1.3 To make sure everybody has clear and accurate information, it is important to establish, and maintain, a close liaison with all the parties who will be involved in the process of loading and operating freight vehicles.

G 2.1.2 Information provided by infrastructure managers

- G 2.1.2.1 Information provided by the infrastructure manager will normally include, but not be limited to, details of:
 - a) Route availability.
 - b) Permitted freight train loads.
 - c) Permitted speed of trains.
 - d) Permitted train lengths.
 - e) Train timings.
 - f) Exceptional load conditions.
 - g) Applicable vehicle gauges.
 - h) Local working instructions for the operation of freight trains on Network Rail managed infrastructure.

G 2.1.3 Information provided by railway undertakings

- G 2.1.3.1 Information provided by railway undertakings will normally include, but not be limited to:
 - a) Train details, such as:
 - i. Train weight.
 - ii. Train length.
 - iii. Number and type of vehicles.
 - iv. Braking capability.
 - v. Route availability.
 - vi. Vehicle load gauge.
 - b) Routes the trains will travel over.
 - c) Exceptional load documentation.
 - d) Safety information.
- G 2.1.3.2 Vehicle information can be made available in paper form or processed by computers. The Network Rail Total Operations Processing System (TOPS) handles the majority of train and associated information.

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- G 2.1.3.3 All Infrastructure managers and railway undertakings staff involved in the movement of freight trains are to check that all appropriate safety information and documentation applicable to the train they are going to work is available.

G 2.2 Staff competence

G 2.2.1 General

- G 2.2.1.1 Competence standards developed by the railway undertaking are to be applied to staff with responsibilities for verifying the standards of loading and the securing of loads in accordance with loading instructions. Competence standards would typically provide for the following elements.
- G 2.2.1.2 Provision to staff assessed as competent of a certificate that identifies the types of traffic for which the necessary loading competencies are held.
- G 2.2.1.3 A process in place that allows infrastructure managers and railway undertakings to check that staff involved in loading, securing and load verification continue to be competent to undertake those duties.
- G 2.2.1.4 Keeping of records of the issue of certificates and the recertification of staff holding load verification competence.
- G 2.2.1.5 All employees of infrastructure managers and railway undertakings who have responsibilities in connection with the carriage of dangerous goods will require adequate information, instruction and training to enable them to understand the possible dangers arising and the action they should take in an emergency. Further details can be found in GO/GN3676 Guidance on the Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail.

G 2.3 Labelling of vehicles and load units

- G 2.3.1 Vehicles carrying load units do not normally require load labels.
- G 2.3.2 Labels are required for vehicles that have been dealt with under the:
- a) Exceptional loads procedure.
 - b) Loads examined procedure.
 - c) Defect reporting procedure.
- G 2.3.3 Customers are allowed to place labels on vehicles provided this has been agreed with the railway undertaking and such labels do not obscure any labels already in place.
- G 2.3.4 International rules apply to the labelling of wagons which form part of an international train service.
- G 2.3.5 Railway undertakings are responsible for controlling the application and removal of labels containing safety information.
- G 2.3.6 The staff of railway undertakings will require instructions regarding the provision and control of wagon labels.

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G 2.4 Development of loading instructions

G 2.4.1 General

- G 2.4.1.1 General loading and securing requirements, for those involved in train preparation and operation to enable identification of any actual or potential hazards with freight loads, apply to all types of freight, whether:
- a) Bulk – for example coal, ballast, aggregate.
 - b) Commodities – for example steel, timber, vehicles.
 - c) Intermodal – for example load units, piggyback.
- G 2.4.1.2 The requirements for loading and securing particular freight and the associated competence requirements for those involved, are determined and published by:
- a) Railway undertakings, for the goods they carry.
 - b) Infrastructure Managers for infrastructure traffic, which may be carried by any railway undertaking.
- G 2.4.1.3 Railway undertakings are responsible for ensuring that all loads carried on Network Rail managed infrastructure are correctly loaded and secured such that they can operate safely in relation to other vehicles, trains and staff on the railway.
- G 2.4.1.4 Railway undertakings need to carefully consider what method to use to secure a load because of the potential for loads to become unstable during a journey.
- G 2.4.1.5 Where changes are made to the system for securing loads, it is important that special care is taken to check that such changes will still provide the necessary load security and integrity.
- G 2.4.1.6 The methods used for securing loads conveyed by road vehicles may not be appropriate for use on rail vehicles. It is important to make sure that each method of securing loads is positively verified for rail use. This is an especially important consideration when road vehicles are to be conveyed on rail vehicles.

G 2.4.2 Basic principles of loading

- G 2.4.2.1 Before vehicles are loaded a check is necessary to make sure that they are fit to be loaded, with special attention given to door and load securing mechanisms, bolsters and stanchions.
- G 2.4.2.2 Publication in the loading instructions is a means of specifying that a load (or load unit) is suitable for acceptance, before it is placed on a rail vehicle.
- G 2.4.2.3 Safe loading requires that loads are:
- a) Distributed as uniformly as possible to make sure that all wheels are evenly loaded.
 - b) Not positioned diagonally across a vehicle.
- G 2.4.2.4 It is important that special consideration is given to loads which might be liable to be displaced en-route, especially light or loose loads which are susceptible to aerodynamic forces.
- G 2.4.2.5 When loading goods of differing weights, it is important to consider all goods are loaded in a position that avoids them being damaged.
- G 2.4.2.6 For infrastructure traffic (for example rails, track panels and machinery), to check that common standards are applied, the infrastructure manager provides railway undertakings, its staff and contractors with loading and securing requirements.