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Network communication

General

To prescribe the rules for spoken and written communication in the Network.

Principle

Communication in the Network must be:

- clear, brief and unambiguous
- relevant to the task at hand
- agreed to its meaning before being acted upon.

Safeworking communication must use:

- the 24-hour clock to give the time of day
- the phonetic alphabet and spoken numbers to identify:
 - train numbers and track vehicle numbers
 - signal numbers.

Communication equipment used for rail traffic operation or work on track must be tested and checked for its intended operation.

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Confirmation of communication

The receiver must confirm the content of a message by repeating the message back to the sender, if the communication is about:

- a Condition Affecting the Network (CAN)
- a Proceed Authority
- an instruction not to proceed
- a work on track authority
- a work on track method
- work on track Train Running Information
- Special working.

As far as practicable once commenced, communication must be completed without interruption.

If communication is interrupted, the sender must restart the communication from the beginning, repeating items already sent.

The receiver must not act on the communication until the sender confirms that the message has been repeated correctly.

Relaying communications

If it is not possible for a sender to communicate directly with an intended receiver, Qualified Workers may relay the content.

The content of a communication must be relayed exactly as received.

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Emergency communication

Emergency communications must be:

- given priority
- answered immediately.

If there is an emergency message on an open-channel radio, other users of the channel must stop transmission immediately.

Spoken communication

Open-channel communication must use the standard terms and protocols in this Rule and in *NPR 721 Spoken and written communication*.

If not sure whether communication equipment is discrete channel, Qualified Workers must use open-channel communication protocols.

Spoken communication must be promptly acknowledged.



WARNING

Qualified Workers must not assume that a receiver has understood a message before the receiver confirms that the message has been understood.

If the meaning of a spoken communication is not understood:

- the receiver must ask that it be repeated, or
- if necessary, the sender and the receiver must use the phonetic alphabet and spoken numbers to clarify and confirm the message.

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The receiver must try again as soon as practicable, or arrange alternative means to communicate with the sender, if:

- the receiver cannot understand the message, or
- the sender cannot hear or understand the reply.

Recording spoken communications

If spoken communication recording equipment is provided, it must be used to record Network communications.

The recordings must be kept for at least 28 days.

Spoken communication protocols

Senders and receivers of communications must start the communication with identification of the receiver first, and the sender second.

Communications from an attended location must include the sender's name and location.

Communications from train or track vehicle must include the sender's train number or track vehicle number.

Communications from a worksite must include the sender's:

- name
- Safeworking designation
- location.

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Open-channel radio communication

Unless the use of 450.050MHz train radios has been advertised in a Weekly Notice as prohibited at that location, they may be used for shunting in yards.

Qualified Workers using open-channel radios must:

- except in an emergency, check that the channel is not already in use before starting a transmission
 - if a reply is expected, use the term "Over" to end each statement
 - use the term "Out" to end each transmission.
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Written Safeworking communication

Qualified Workers compiling Network Forms, authorities and records must:

- record numbers in numerals, not words, for example using "12" instead of "twelve"
- use only authorised abbreviations, and
- unless completing an electronic form:
 - write clearly in ink
 - draw a single line through errors, and if required print the corrections above them
 - initial corrections in the margin beside the correction.

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If Network Forms include items that have a numbered box before them, Qualified Workers must:

- tick the numbered box if it applies, and complete the item, or
- place a cross in the numbered box if the item does not apply.

Qualified Workers must complete all other items on the form.

Unless otherwise specified, Network Forms and records must be kept for at least 90 days.

Network Procedures

NPR 721 Spoken and written communication

Effective date

29 September 2019