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Using Lookouts Safely

This information has been prepared to reinforce the safe and correct use of Lookouts as a safety measure for work on track.

Lookouts give warning about rail traffic movements to workers in the Danger Zone. They are used in work track methods such as Lookout Working and Absolute Signal Blocking (ASB) as a safety measure.

Protection Officers are responsible for placing Lookouts by:

- identifying all points of entry into the worksite
- calculating the required Minimum Warning Time (MWT) and Minimum Sighting Distance (MSD) for each entry point
- determining the number of required Lookouts
- placing Lookouts in a safe place.

Equipment

Lookouts need:

- a high-visibility sleeve worn on the arm giving the ALL CLEAR handsignal
- two independent forms of effective communication with workers
- if necessary, an audible warning device.

Radios or telephones must not be used by Lookouts to warn workers.

Lookout duties

Whilst performing Lookout duties, a Lookout must be positioned in a safe place. This includes:

- giving warning of approaching rail traffic to workers
- warning workers when MSD has been obstructed or lost
- once workers and equipment are in a safe place, giving the ALL CLEAR handsignal to approaching rail traffic
- making sure the line is clear before telling the Protection Officer that work is safe to resume.

It is important that Lookouts remain in a safe place and that they do not encroach on the Danger Zone whilst performing the duties listed above.



FIGURE 1: A Lookout giving the ALL CLEAR handsignal from a safe place.

Using Lookouts over a large area

Some worksites extend over a large area due to the nature of the work.

Some examples include:

- track walk inspections
- visual overhead wiring inspections
- points maintenance
- signal testing

As the work is being completed over the large area, Protection Officers must consider the placement and repositioning of Lookouts along the extended area as part of the safety assessment.

When repositioning Lookouts:

- make sure all workers and equipment are in a safe place before repositioning the Lookout,
- move the Lookout to an assessed location where MWT and communication with workers is maintained,
- make sure the Lookout is in position and the line is clear before allowing workers to move.



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Safeworking information

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