

SAFE Notice 2026

196

NETWORK RULES AMENDMENT - NWT 304 TRACK OCCUPANCY AUTHORITY

From Saturday, 23 May 2026

This SAFE Notice cancels and replaces SAFE Notice 343 – 2025 due to expiry.

From Friday, 23 May 2025, NWT 304 Track Occupancy Authority (V10.2) was amended until further notice.

Amendment: TOA limits

The Protection Officer must nominate the TOA limits as being between:

- *one yard limit and another yard limit, or*
- *defined clearance points wholly within one yard's limits, or*
- *one yard limit and a defined clearance point in another yard, or*
- *a defined clearance point within one yard's limits and a defined clearance point within another yard's limits, or*
- *defined clearance points wholly within an intermediate siding.*

Please Note: NWT 304 Track Occupancy Authority found on the RailSafe website has been updated in conjunction.

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NWT 304 Track Occupancy Authority

Purpose

To prescribe the rules for authorising, issuing, and using a Track Occupancy Authority (TOA).

Principle

A TOA authorises occupancy of track within specified limits, for work on track or track vehicle movements.

A TOA may be authorised for:

- exclusive occupancy of track, or
- joint occupancy of track if:
 - following a unidirectional rail traffic movement, or
 - rail traffic is disabled, or
 - rail traffic is stabled, or
 - mutual agreement has been reached with the holder of another TOA for the same limits or overlapping limits, or
 - mutual agreement has been reached with the holder of a Track Work Authority (TWA).

A TOA is issued to the Protection Officer for an agreed period.

A TOA may include more than one section.

For track within the specified limits, a maximum of two TOAs may be in effect at any one time.

A TOA may involve one or more track vehicles and machines working within the specified limits.

A TOA may be issued for track vehicles to travel singly or in convoy.

A TOA may be issued to adjoin a Local Possession Authority (LPA) if agreed to by the Possession Protection Officer in accordance with *NWT 302 Local Possession Authority*.

work on track**NWT 304 Track Occupancy Authority****TOA limits**

The Protection Officer must nominate the TOA limits as being between:

- one yard limit and another yard limit, or
- defined clearance points wholly within one yard's limits, or
- one yard limit and a defined clearance point in another yard, or
- a defined clearance point within one yard's limits and a defined clearance point within another yard's limits, or
- defined clearance points wholly within an intermediate siding.

If a TOA is on more than one line, the Protection Officer must nominate the TOA limits separately for each line.

Authorisation

Only Network Controllers may authorise a TOA for track under their control.

If the proposed limits of a TOA affect more than one Network Controller:

- the Network Controllers must agree about the Network Controller area most affected, and
- the Network Controller responsible for the area most affected must authorise the TOA.

Before authorising a TOA, the Network Controller must make sure that:

- the track within the limits of the TOA is unoccupied, and will remain unoccupied, except as specified in the TOA, and
- the Protection Officer knows about existing obstructions, and
- the Protection Officer understands and agrees to the TOA limits, and
- blocking facilities have been applied to prevent unauthorised rail traffic entry into the TOA limits.

Attended locations

If the limits of the proposed TOA are wholly within the yard limits of an attended location, the Protection Officer must ask the Signaller to issue the TOA.

The Signaller must get authority to issue the TOA from the Network Controller.

work on track**NWT 304 Track Occupancy Authority****Pilot staff**

A Network Controller may authorise a TOA during pilot staff working after arrangements have been made to secure the pilot staff out of use for the duration of the TOA.

The TOA must be issued on a *NRF 002 Track Occupancy Authority (TOA)* form.

Half-staff

If practicable, the Protection Officer must arrange for signals at the limits of the TOA to be set at **STOP** by taking one or more half-staffs and securing them for the period of the TOA.

Signallers must record, in permanent form when a half-staff is:

- secured for work on track, or
- used for a track vehicle movement.

If a half-staff for the section cannot be taken and secured, a TOA must be issued on a *NRF 002 Track Occupancy Authority (TOA)* form.

Joint occupancy following a unidirectional rail traffic movement

Before issuing the TOA, the Network Controller must make sure that preceding rail traffic is authorised for a unidirectional movement only, and has passed clear and complete beyond the:

- limits of the proposed worksites, or
- starting location of the track vehicle movement.

Joint occupancy with disabled rail traffic

To allow infrastructure restoration work, the Network Controller may authorise a TOA for a portion of track occupied by disabled rail traffic, in accordance with *NGE 206 Reporting and responding to a Condition Affecting the Network (CAN)*.

All disabled rail traffic within the proposed limits of the TOA must be restrained.

Joint occupancy with stabled rail traffic

The Network Controller may authorise a TOA with one or more sidings occupied by stabled rail traffic if:

- the stabled rail traffic is not associated with the TOA, and
- protection is placed to prevent the unintended movement of the stabled rail traffic.

work on track**NWT 304 Track Occupancy Authority****Joint occupancy with a second TOA**

The Network Controller may authorise a second TOA for the same limits or with overlapping limits:

- after the Protection Officers have consulted with each other, and
- with the agreement of the Protection Officer holding the first TOA.

Each TOA must be recorded separately in permanent form, and where possible have separate blocking facilities applied.

Joint occupancy with a TWA

The Network Controller may authorise a TOA where there is a current TWA:

- after the Protection Officers have consulted with each other, and
- with the agreement of the TWA Protection Officer.

Prior to the issue of a TOA for a wrong running-direction track vehicle journey, the TWA Protection Officer must place three railway track signals between 500m and 1000m from the worksite for the expected wrong running-direction movement.

Issue of TOA

The Signaller must get the Network Controller's authority to issue the TOA.

Where the TOA limits extend into the yard limits controlled by another Signaller, the affected Signallers and Network Controller must confer.

The Network Controller will nominate an issuing Signaller. If a written Authority is issued, it must be issued on a *NRF 002 Track Occupancy Authority (TOA)* form.

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At all times there must be a nominated Protection Officer for a TOA.

The Protection Officer must:

- get the TOA, and
- protect workers from rail traffic, and
- make sure that worksites are protected against the unauthorised entry of rail traffic, and
- be the only person to tell workers about the:
 - locations of safe places
 - safety measures in place
 - extent of the area protected
 - changes to protection arrangements.
- make sure that the protection is in place before work starts.

When requesting a TOA, the Protection Officer must identify the line names and limits of the TOA.

If the TOA is for a joint occupancy following a unidirectional rail traffic movement, nominate the limits of the worksites or road/rail access point as being between two signals.

Signals must be identified by their numbers.

**Note**

Nominating the worksite limits or road/rail access point as being between signals, provides only a guide to the Signaller to locate the worksite limits or road/rail access point on the track indicator diagram.

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Protecting the TOA limits

The Signaller must apply blocking facilities to prevent unauthorised rail traffic entry into the TOA limits.

All routes allowing entry into the portions of track within the TOA limits must be protected against unauthorised rail traffic movements.

i Note

If the TOA limits extend into the yard limits controlled by more than one Signaller, the affected Signallers must confer to make sure that all routes allowing entry are protected.

Terminal lines and balloon loops

If the Signaller tells the Protection Officer that there is no planned rail traffic movement between the worksites and the end of a terminal line or balloon loop, railway track signals and a worksite protection marker from that direction is not required.

Protecting Worksites

Unless otherwise specified in this Rule, worksites must have three railway track signals and a worksite protection marker placed between 500m and 1000m from each end.

Worksite protection markers must include the contact details of the Protection Officer.

Worksite within 500m of the protecting signal

A worksite may be established within 500m of the protecting signal only if:

- a set of points has been clipped and locked to prevent access to the TOA limit, and
- a worksite protection marker is placed at the TOA limit.

Railway track signal protection is not required.

Multiple worksites

Worksites less than 500m apart must be protected and managed as a single worksite.

If worksites are between 500m and 1000m apart:

- three railway track signals must be placed midway between the worksites, and
- a worksite protection marker must be placed next to the middle railway track signal.

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Stabled rail traffic

If a siding within the limits of a TOA is occupied by stabled rail traffic not associated with the TOA, three railway track signals and a worksite protection marker must be placed immediately in front of the stabled rail traffic to prevent unintended movements within the TOA.

Intermediate sidings

If the TOA limits are wholly within an intermediate siding, the points allowing entry to the siding must be clipped and locked for the duration of the TOA and a worksite protection marker placed at the TOA limit. Railway track signal protection is not required.

If the release for the points can be given from a remote location, the Signaller must apply blocking facilities to the release controls.

Track vehicle journey

Railway track signals and worksite protection markers are not required:

- for a track vehicle journey, or
- for a track vehicle that has stopped to allow work to be carried out using:
 - light, non-powered hand tools, or
 - light, battery powered tools or devices, or
 - light, powered hand tools.

If a track vehicle journey is stopped to carry out work that breaks the track or alters track geometry or structure, that work must be protected as a worksite.

Rail traffic

Only rail traffic associated with the TOA may enter the TOA limits.

The Protection Officer must make sure that rail traffic associated with the TOA does not exceed the TOA limits.

Adjacent lines

If the safety assessment shows that work need to be protected from rail traffic on adjacent lines, the Protection Officer must arrange to implement safety measures in accordance with *NPR 712 Protecting work from rail traffic on adjacent lines*.

The Protection Officer may arrange for the speed of rail traffic on adjacent lines to be restricted.

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The Protection Officer or a delegate must act as the Pilot.

Entering and travelling within TOA limits

Entry into the TOA limits must be authorised by:

- clearing of fixed signals protecting the TOA limits, or
- the Signaller from the entry to the section.

Track Vehicles associated with the TOA must be piloted into the Authority's limits:

- from the controlled absolute signal protecting the TOA limit, or
- if there are no controlled absolute signals, from the entry to the section.

Travelling within TOA limits

Track vehicles must be piloted within the TOA limits.

Within yard limits, Track Vehicle Operators must get the Signaller's authority for unsignalled movements.

Departing the TOA limits

Rail traffic may depart from a TOA limit only after obtaining the correct authority for travel.

Liaison

The Protection Officer must be the only point of contact between Signallers and workers for matters of worksite protection.

The Protection Officer must:

- tell affected Signallers about protection and safety measures applied to lines adjacent to the TOA, and
 - tell affected Signallers about work progress, and
 - arrange for the movement of rail traffic associated with the TOA, and
 - if necessary, seek an extension of time.
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An outgoing Protection Officer must tell the incoming Protection Officer about the worksite protection arrangements.

The incoming Protection Officer must:

- tell affected Signallers about the changed contact details, and
 - record their details on the TOA form.
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Fulfilling the TOA

The TOA may be fulfilled only when the Protection Officer:

- arranges for work to continue under another work on track authority or work on track method, or
- tells the Signaller that:
 - the portion of track included in the TOA is clear and available for use, and
 - if required, the portion of track included in the TOA has been certified as fit for use, and
 - point clips and locks have been removed, and
 - railway track signals and worksite protection markers have been removed, and
 - if taken, half-staffs have been returned.

The Protection Officer must tell the Signaller about operating restrictions that have been placed or removed.

If arrangements have been made to continue work under another work on track authority, the Protection Officer must ensure that the protection for the TOA is not removed until the new work on track authority is issued and the required protection is in place.

If they are not required for ongoing work on track or for other reasons, Signallers must remove blocking facilities.

The Signaller must tell the Network Controller:

- that the TOA has been fulfilled, and
 - about any operating restrictions that have been placed or removed.
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NWT 304 Track Occupancy Authority

Keeping records

Network Controllers and Signallers must record the TOA details in permanent form.

The Protection Officer must record, in permanent form:

- the TOA details, and
- protection arrangements for worksites, and
- details of communications about:
 - current protection arrangements, and
 - changes to the worksite protection arrangements.

Related Documents

<i>NPR 701</i>	<i>Using a Track Occupancy Authority</i>
<i>NPR 702</i>	<i>Using a Track Work Authority</i>
<i>NPR 707</i>	<i>Clipping points</i>
<i>NPR 709</i>	<i>Using railway track signals</i>
<i>NPR 710</i>	<i>Piloting rail traffic</i>
<i>NPR 712</i>	<i>Protecting work from rail traffic on adjacent lines</i>

SYDNEY, 06 MAY 2026

DIRECTOR NETWORK STANDARDS, SYSTEMS & QUALITY SYDNEY TRAINS

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