

Important Role of Lead Communicator

Why Lead Communicators Matter?

In a complex and dynamic rail environment, safety critical communication is one of our most powerful defences against operational error and harm. The words we choose, the information we share, and the way we confirm understanding can mean the difference between a safe operation and a serious incident. From routine movements to emergency situations, disciplined communication underpins the safety of our workforce, passengers, infrastructure, and the broader network.

This update is to explore what it means to take the lead in safety critical communication. By being proactive, seeking clarity, and ensuring messages are correctly understood, we can reduce the risk of miscommunication and contribute to safer outcomes across the rail network.

Who Leads the Conversation?

To ensure safe and effective communication, one person must take responsibility for leading each spoken exchange. The lead communicator is responsible for:

- Ensuring all parties clearly understand the information being shared.
- Confirming understanding before anyone acts on the information.
- Following communication protocols and good communication practices.
- Maintaining a calm, professional, and respectful manner.

The lead communicator on the Sydney Trains Network may be:

- Electrical Systems Operator (ESO), or
- The Network Controller (NC), when not communicating with the ESO, or
- The Signaller, when not communicating with the NC or ESO.

In all other situations, the person who initiates the communication becomes the lead communicator.

How to lead the communication effectively?

The lead communicator plays an important role by:

- Providing a single point of control for the conversation, reducing the risk of conflicting instructions or confusion.
- Listening actively, detecting and clarifying any misunderstandings in a proactive, timely manner.
- Asking questions to clarify and confirm understanding before actions are taken, helping to prevent errors caused by misheard or misunderstood information
- Keeping control of the conversation without dominating, redirect if the conversation gets off track in a calm, professional and respectful manner.
- Confirm shared understanding and next steps before anyone acts on the information.



Safety Critical Communication (SCC) Refresher

The SCC Refresher is being rolled out across relevant business areas to reinforce the importance of effective Safety Critical Communication across our network.

Completion of this mandatory training is a requirement of your role.

Depending on business needs, the refresher may be delivered through:

- Face-to-face training
- E-learning
- Progressive workplace training

The refresher must be completed using the method assigned by your business area.

Refer to your knowledge of Network Rules and Procedures:

- NGE 204 Network communication
- NPR 721 Spoken and written communication
- PRO58 Safety Critical Communication Organisational Procedure

Feedback/Questions Email to:

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