



OFFICE OF RAIL REGULATION

User Worked Railway Level Crossings

Devising a safe system of work for crossing the railway

This guidance is for businesses whose employees may need to cross the railway.

It is a list of issues to consider when drawing up a safe system of work for employees who cross the railway. It is focused on a type of crossing called a **user worked crossing**. These crossings require people to operate the crossing themselves.

Issues to consider include:

- 1. Does your business need to use the crossing?**
 - Is there an alternative route?
 - Is there any scope for closure, if your business is the “authorised user” for the crossing?
- 2. Can you eliminate the risk from crossing in any other way?**
 - Can you take animals across in a vehicle rather than on foot?
 - Can you change the land use to avoid or minimise the need to cross?
- 3. Understanding the crossing controls**
 - What does the railway provide at the crossing for those using it?
- 4. Understanding the instructions at the crossing**
 - Have you applied them to your circumstances?
 - Have you tested your workers’ understanding of them?
- 5. Additional hazards**
 - Such as sloping ground, overhead lines, skewed crossing, which may affect workers’ safety whilst crossing
- 6. Planning for foreseeable abnormal situations**
 - Are you crossing with an unusual vehicle (e.g. tracked)?
 - Is reversing necessary?
 - Is there snow and ice?
- 7. What to do if there is a problem with the crossing controls**
 - Can you and your workers recognise when there is a problem and take appropriate action?
- 8. Out of hours arrangements**
 - Do you know what the alternative contact number is?
 - Have your workers got it to hand?
- 9. What to do in an emergency**
 - Do you and your workers know how and when to contact the signaller?



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Other issues to consider in drawing up a safe system of work include:

- Pre plan your operations and discuss them with Network Rail
 - Is there a window to work in – such as planned possessions when the railway is not in use?
 - Can Network Rail provide a railway crossing attendant for the duration of your operations?
 - Could you employ your own banksman / gateman / phone operator to make your operation safer across the level crossing?
- Consider locking the gates if it is only your workers who are using the crossing.

Briefing workers who cross the railway

Briefing for workers on general use: They need an

- Understanding of the crossing instructions
- Understanding of the method of work

Briefing for workers on specific crossings: They need to know

- When to use the phone (and/or alternatives)
- If there is a lack of pedestrian facilities – how to cross safely

Briefing for workers on foreseeable abnormal situations: They need to know what to do about

- Adverse Weather – fog, darkness
- Abnormal situations / loads / vehicles / reversing
- Damaged, missing or malfunctioning controls at the crossing
- Out of hours arrangements
- Emergencies

Report damaged or defective crossings to Network Rail **08457 11 41 41**

Report misuse to:

British Transport Police on **0800 40 50 40** or Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**

Issued by ORR Safety Directorate
For further information ring 0207 282 3798 or ORR switchboard 0207 282 2000

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