

**Railways Act 1993**  
**General Approval for Freight Track Access Contracts 2024**

*Coming into force 1 April 2024*

The Office of Rail and Road, in exercise of the powers conferred upon it by section 18(1)(c) and section 22(3) of the Railways Act 1993 (the 'Act') gives the following general approval.

**Citation, commencement and revocation**

1. This general approval may be cited as the General Approval for Freight Track Access Contracts 2024.
2. This general approval comes into force on 1 April 2024.
3. The General Approval for freight access contracts dated 1 April 2019 is hereby revoked from 1 April 2024.

**Interpretation and information**

4. Unless the context otherwise requires, the terms defined in the Act, the Network Code and the model track access contracts published by ORR shall have the same meaning in this general approval.
5. Section 72(5) of the Act states a copy of all new and amended access contracts must be sent to ORR within 14 days of being made. This applies to those approved under this general approval. Subject to the requirement in section 72(3) of the Act that ORR have regard to the need to exclude certain information, ORR will enter such copies into the public register.

**Application**

6. This general approval applies to certain new and amended track access contracts with Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (Network Rail), a company registered in England under number 02904587.
7. ORR approves any new track access contract made with Network Rail:

- (a) on the same terms as the Model Track Access Contract (Freight Services) published by ORR, subject to the restrictions in Annex A;
  - (b) on the same terms as the Model Freight Customer Track Access Contract published by ORR, subject to the restrictions in Annex B; and
  - (c) on the same terms as the Model Freight operating company customer track access contract published by ORR where rights have been drawn down in a Drawdown Notice that is not subject to a Revocation Notice, subject to the restrictions in Annex C.
8. Where a track access contract with Network Rail is on the same terms as any of the model contracts mentioned in paragraph 7, ORR approves changes to the track access contract:
- (a) as listed in annex D; or
  - (b) to reflect changes to the relevant model contract, as published on the ORR website from time to time.
9. Where an annex to this general approval says consultation shall be carried out in respect of a new or amended contract, the parties to the access contract must:
- (a) carry out the necessary consultation; and
  - (b) ensure there are no outstanding objections from any consultee before this general approval can be used.



Gareth Clancy

Head of Access and Licensing

**FOR AND ON BEHALF OF  
THE OFFICE OF RAIL AND ROAD**

## ANNEX A

- A1. The areas marked by square brackets must be completed as appropriate;
- A2. The “Indemnity Incident Cap” in clause 11.6.5 must be completed with a value of £8,300,000;
- A3. The “Liability Cap” in paragraph 1(ii) of Schedule 9 must be completed with a value of £8,300,000;
- A4. The “Expiry Date” in clause 1.1 must be no more than five years from the “Effective Date” in clause 3.1;
- A5. No cell in the rights table at Annex 1 to Schedule 5 is to be populated other than those for:
- (a) firm rights with between four- and twenty-four-hour windows which do not form part of a Y Path; and/or
  - (b) contingent rights
- which are not to be Planned to operate over declared Congested Infrastructure.
- A6. A consultation must be carried out where firm rights with between four and twenty-four-hour windows are included in an access contract.

## **ANNEX B**

- B1. The areas marked by square brackets must be completed as appropriate;
- B2. The “Expiry Date” in clause 3.1 must be no more than five years from the date of the execution of the contract;
- B3. No cell in the rights table at Annex 1 to Schedule 5 is populated other than those for:
- (a) firm rights with four-to-twenty-four-hour windows which do not form part of a Y Path; and/or
  - (b) contingent rights
- which are not to be Planned to operate over declared Congested Infrastructure.
- B4. A consultation must be carried out where firm rights with between four- and twenty-four-hour windows are included in an access contract.

## **ANNEX C**

- C1. The areas marked by square brackets must be completed as appropriate;
- C2. The “Expiry Date” in clause 1.1 must reflect the last date of operation specified in the Drawdown Notice and, in any event, must be no more than five years from the “Effective Date”;
- C3. The cells in the rights table at Annex 1 to Schedule 5 must be populated with the freight access rights specified in the drawdown notice;
- C4. The “Indemnity Incident Cap” in clause 11.6.5 is included and replicates that in clause 11.6.5 of the appointed Train Operator’s track access contract (freight services);
- C5. The definition of “Liability Cap” in Schedule 9 must be completed and replicate that in clause 11.6.5 of the appointed Train Operator’s track access contract (freight services), subject to any indexation provisions.

## ANNEX D

### No consultation is required for the following changes:

- D1. Changing the “Expiry Date” to reduce the duration of the contract.
- D2. Changing the contact particulars in Schedule 1 of the contract, provided each party's “address for the services of notices” is the registered office legally recorded with Companies House.
- D3. Changing the provisions relating to public holidays in paragraph 2.4 of Schedule 5.
- D4. Making changes to the rights table at Annex 1 to Schedule 5 of the contract to:
  - (a) Remove an access right by deleting the relevant row from the rights table;
  - (b) Include any new contingent right;
  - (c) Reduce or delete the contents of the columns entitled:
    - (i) “Routing”;
    - (ii) “Intermediate Point”;
    - (iii) “Minimum Dwell Time at Intermediate Points”;
    - (iv) “Special Terms”; and
    - (v) “Days per Week”;
  - (d) Increase or delete the hours in the columns entitled:
    - (i) “Minimum Turn Around Time at Origin”;
    - (ii) “Minimum Turn Around Time at Destination”;
  - (e) Change the contents of the columns “Origin”, “Origin Stanox”, “Destination”, and “Destination Stanox” to correct typographical errors or to reduce an access right that has been truncated;
  - (f) Delete the contents of columns if firm rights are changed to contingent rights;
  - (g) Increase, reduce or delete the contents of the column “Contract Miles”; and

(h) Change the contents of the columns:

- (i) "Timing Load";
- (ii) "Maximum Length of Train";
- (iii) "Route Availability Code (RA)"; and
- (iv) "Loading Gauge";

provided that, as necessary, the process relating to the introduction of new rolling stock/equipment stipulated under Part F of the Network Code has been completed and the sponsor is entitled to implement the vehicle change.

**Consultation is required for the following changes:**

D5. Making changes to the rights table at Annex 1 to Schedule 5 of the contract to:

(a) Include any new firm right with four-to-twenty-four-hour windows which does not form part of a Y Path and which is not to be Planned to operate over declared Congested Infrastructure;

(b) Adjust the contents of the columns:

- (i) "Routing";
- (ii) "Intermediate Point";
- (iii) "Minimum Dwell Time at Intermediate Points";
- (iv) "Special Terms"; and
- (v) "Days per Week" provided there is no resulting net increase in the quantum of firm rights contained in the contract; and

(c) Adjust the contents of the columns:

- (i) "Departure Window From";
- (ii) "Departure Window To";
- (iii) "Arrival Window From";
- (iv) "Arrival Window To";
- (v) "Minimum Turn Around Time at Origin";
- (vi) "Minimum Turn Around Time at Destination"; and
- (vii) "Minimum Dwell Time at Intermediate Point";

to reflect train slots in respect of that access right in the working timetable, and providing the range of the Departure and Arrival Windows or the Minimum Turn Around Times are not decreased.