

Take 5 To prepare

Resilience and specialist operations team briefing note:

Railway Incidents

The Ambulance Service is called to respond to many incidents each year which require operational ambulance staff, officers, and HEMS / Critical Care staff to enter the railway trackside environment to access injured patients. Trackside refers to the Network Rail infrastructure encompassing the general 'National Rail' systems in the UK and any other rail systems/environments in the UK. Early consideration for support from HART should be made for working underneath train carriages, additional portable lighting in hours of darkness, support in any scene access issues and the transportation of patients along railway lines.

General Guidelines

Do not approach the track until 'Power Off and Trains Stopped' is confirmed. Use the mnemonic POWER:

P	Power off and trains stopped confirmed by authorised person when in doubt, contact EOC
O	Off the tracks unless the patient appears viable
W	Wear your personal protective equipment (minimum Hi-vis jacket and helmet)
E	Ensure EOC and Ambulance Commander knows you are entering or leaving trackside
R	Rapidly remove viable patient and treat in the safest, agreed area off tracks



Hazards

Approaching trains are very quiet and may appear from either direction on the track. At speeds of up to 125mph, they can cover 55 metres (60 yards) in a second and take over a mile to stop.

- Do not go on the track unless authorised to do so.
- Get help from railway staff.
- Always be vigilant for yourself and colleagues.

Slips, Trips & Trapping your feet

The most common cause of accidents on the track is tripping or slipping on cables, sleepers, rails, and other loose objects. Points are a particular hazard because they are likely to move unexpectedly.

- Do not step within the moving blades of points.
- Step over rails and sleepers – Do not walk on top of rails.
- Walk on the ballast / rocks / sleepers.
- Do not walk on top of cable trunking.
- Keep vigilant.

Network Rail Control will immediately advise AOC of all incidents requiring the Ambulance Service, giving details of the circumstances, access location and known hazards. British Transport Police will also be informed, and the control rooms will maintain communication to keep each agency updated of all relevant information.

Network Rail will dispatch a Rail Incident Officer (RIO) or Mobile Operations Manager (MOM) to all incidents where the Emergency Services are attending trackside. At all incidents, the RIO or MOM will be the lead railway representative, coordinating the rail industry input and providing site-specific information.

You should not enter trackside unless a RIO or MOM is on site and has confirmed it is safe to do so.

Following an assessment of the situation on site:

- Trains to run at caution or
 - Trains to be stopped or
 - Traction current/power to be switched off and any subsequent isolation will only be made by direct link between Emergency Services Control Rooms to Network Rail Control unless the RIO is on site and assumes that responsibility.
- Network Rail will confirm once power is switched off and trains have been stopped.**