

Control Assurance Fact Sheet

April 2024

Under the RSNL operators are required to specify the controls used to manage the safety risks associated with their railway operations and have procedures in place for monitoring, reviewing, and revising the adequacy of those controls.

What is control assurance?

Control assurance is a critical component of risk management and when done well it provides risk owners, duty holders and (when required) ONRSR, with confidence that all reasonably practicable controls are in place and working effectively to manage identified safety risks.

The assurance process should be integrated into the RTO's SMS which is usually achieved through a range of processes and activities defined in the SMS, including but not limited to:

- > Internal and/or external auditing and inspections.
- > Review of rail safety risks and control effectiveness.
- > Review of the safety management system.
- > Review of the effectiveness of a change to the railway operations.
- > Investigation of relevant rail safety occurrences.
- > Fit for purpose certification processes.
- > Recording evidence that key safety measures are being implemented, such as maintenance inspections.

When done correctly, control assurance provides a demonstration of due diligence, identifies opportunities for improvement and is a way of proving you are satisfied your organisation is managing its' rail safety duties.

What is a control assurance strategy?

Operators are encouraged to develop a control assurance strategy which clearly outlines what assurance activities will be undertaken to assess risk controls are effective. The complexity of the assurance strategy should reflect the complexity of the railway operations.

As it is not feasible or practical to "obtain assurance" at all times for all controls, the strategy should prioritise the assurance of controls critical to the management and reduction of risks that could lead to the most severe consequences.

The assurance strategy should be supported and implemented throughout all levels of the organisation and importantly, the assurance strategy should allow senior management to monitor and review the key risks and key controls within the organisation so they can take appropriate and decisive corrective action when necessary.

How is control assurance recorded?

The information from control assurance activities can be recorded in various ways, such as:

- > Inspection or Audit Reports
- > Corrective action registers
- > SMS review records
- > Maintenance Inspection Records; and
- > Investigation Reports.

A summary of the results of these activities should be reported to senior management and can be reported annually as part of the RTO's Safety Performance Report to ONRSR.

ONRSR may also ask an RTO to provide evidence that rail safety risk controls are effective:

- > Following a rail safety occurrence.
- > During or after an ONRSR compliance activity.
- > After a change has been implemented.

Further information

If further information of a specific nature is required, please contact ONRSR via email at contact@onrsr.com.au or phone (08) 8406 1500 (South Australia).