

The Rail Safety National Law (RSNL) requires that rail transport operators (i.e. rail infrastructure managers and rolling stock operators) and road managers must enter into interface agreements to manage the risks to safety at interfaces.

What is an interface agreement?

An interface agreement is a written agreement for managing the risks to safety at interfaces.

Interfaces include, but are not limited to, where a railway crosses or operates in parallel with another railway (including light rail or tramline), rolling stock crosses the boundary of an interface onto another railway or registered private siding, a railway crosses a public or private road or footpath (including by a bridge, tunnel, overpass or underpass). Interfaces also include where rolling stock operation is transferred between rolling stock operators, or control of rail infrastructure is transferred between rail transport operators to facilitate construction or maintenance.

These agreements involve coordinating the roles of, and describing the responsibilities and authorities of, the parties involved with the relevant interface.

What is required to be included in an interface agreement?

The minimum requirements of an interface agreement are set out in section 105 of the RSNL and must include provisions for:

- > Implementing and maintaining measures to manage identified risks.
- > Evaluation and revision of those measures.
- > The roles and responsibilities of each party in relation to those measures.
- > How parties will communicate about and monitor compliance with their obligations under the agreement.

- > The process for review and revision of the agreement.

Who is required to enter into an interface agreement?

Rail transport operators must enter into interface agreements with other rail transport operators to manage the risks to safety arising from their railway operations.

Rail infrastructure managers and road managers of public roads must enter into interface agreements with each other to manage risks to safety arising from their rail or road crossings.

Road managers of private roads may also be required to enter into interface agreements for rail or road crossings if the responsible rail infrastructure manager has determined that risks to safety must be managed in conjunction with the relevant road manager.

The parties involved in an interface agreement always include one or more rail transport operators, and may also include one or more road managers. Other parties to an interface agreement may include:

- > Owners (rail infrastructure managers) of a private siding; and
- > Contractors who are acting as rail transport operators (e.g. are working under their own accreditation) for part of the contracted task

In any agreement each party has a responsibility to identify and assess risks to safety at the interface, identify measures to manage these risks and seek to enter into an interface agreement with other relevant parties. Penalties of up to \$50,000 for an individual or \$500,000 for a body corporate may apply for parties that fail to comply with these requirements.

If a party is concerned that another party is unreasonably refusing or failing to enter into an

agreement, or is unreasonably delaying negotiations, they can ask ONRSR for assistance. The requestor will need to provide sufficient evidence that they have made reasonable efforts to negotiate with the other party.

ONRSR may give directions

If the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator (ONRSR) is satisfied that a rail transport operator, rail infrastructure manager or road manager is unreasonably refusing or failing to enter into an interface agreement, or is unreasonably delaying the negotiation of an agreement, ONRSR may give that party a written notice requiring them to enter into an agreement by a certain date.

If this is not complied with, ONRSR may determine the arrangements that will apply and direct the parties involved to give effect to those arrangements. ONRSR may also give a notice to a party requiring them to provide information that will assist ONRSR to make such a determination.

Compliance with any direction or written notice issued by ONRSR is mandatory and failure to comply could incur penalties.

Register of interface agreements

Rail transport operators, rail infrastructure managers and road managers are required by the RSNL to each maintain a register of interface agreements to which they are a party and a register of arrangements determined by ONRSR.

Further information

- > ONRSR's [Interface coordination webpage](#)
- > [Template interface agreement for rail or road crossings](#)
- > [Using the template interface agreement for rail or road crossings guideline](#)
- > [Safety Management System Guideline](#)