



SUBJECT: *Safety of workers undertaking the shunting of rollingstock*

NOTICE TO OWNERS OF ROLLINGSTOCK AND OPERATORS OF RAILWAYS

The following information is provided in the interest of improving rail industry safety performance, and is based on best available information.

Issue

On Wednesday 2 February 2005, a rail safety worker was seriously injured whilst undertaking shunting operations. The investigation, undertaken by Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB), did not identify the exact cause of the incident. However, the report identified a number of factors that contributed to the incident. These may be relevant to other railway organisations that undertake shunting activities.

The ATSB report, released on 31 March 2006, is available from the ATSB website – www.atSB.gov.au

In response to the factors identified in the report, owners and operators of railway rollingstock should, in consultation with workers, address the following:

Shunting Operations

- Ensure that a thorough risk assessment of shunting activities has been completed, and, if necessary, recently reviewed. The risk assessment should consider, but not be limited to, risks associated with riding on rollingstock, communication systems and protocols, the design of handholds, steps and platforms affixed to rollingstock intended for use by shunting personnel, and the design of areas where shunting may take place.
- Based on the findings of the risk assessment, review or implement work arrangements to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of rail safety workers undertaking shunting, without compromising the safety of shunting activities.
- Review or further develop training programs for workers undertaking shunting activities to ensure that competencies identified during the risk assessment process are addressed and assessed, and appropriate retraining of railway safety workers, with respect to shunting activities, is being undertaken.
- Review or develop procedures to provide for clear and consistent communication between rail safety workers supervising shunt activities and ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, all workers involved in shunting activities are aware of the location and status of other workers involved in, or affected by, the shunt movement.

General Railway Operations

- Review or implement procedures to ensure personal protective equipment, such as footwear, worn by rail safety workers is in a serviceable condition.
- Conduct regular audits of work practices to validate that rail safety workers are complying with documented safe working procedures and training directives, and that such processes are effective.
- Ensure instructions/restrictions recommended at periodic health assessments are implemented: If a medical instruction or restriction cannot be fully implemented, processes are in place to consult with the medical practitioner to ensure any proposed alternative is effective.

The Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure does not require rollingstock owners or operators to submit a response to the information provided in this Alert. Department staff may review actions arising from this bulletin at future compliance inspections.

This notice is effective from :

19 / April / 2006

Approved :

Jon Steele
Administrating Authority (Delegate)
and Executive Director
Transport Services Division

Date: 19 April 2006