



Office of Rail Safety

## **SAFETY ALERT**

<b>DATE of ISSUE:</b> 7 May 2010	<b>NOTICE No:</b> RSN 2010 - 01
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<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>Train Parting Occurrence – driver alert systems</b>
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<b>ADVICE TO:</b>	<b>All affected Rail Transport Operators</b>
<b>FROM:</b>	<b>Rob Burrows - General Manager Rail Safety</b>

### **Background**

An incident with potentially serious safety concerns has occurred in WA following a train parting where the motive power and 27 wagons of an 83 mixed train consist continued forward without the driver responding to existing visual and audible alarms. This resulted in the rear portion (56 wagons) of the train being left on a running line creating a potential train to train collision risk for other trains. The risk is higher in dark territory.

The standard gauge freight train service consisted of 4 locomotives (3 in power) and 83 mixed freight wagons totalling 3499 tonnes for 1600 metres in length.

This occurrence occurred in signalled territory and the portion left behind showed the track as occupied which alerted the train controller. With 3 locomotives in power, the driver was able maintain brake pressure at the lead of the train and overcome the resistance of the dragging brakes for two sections before train control contacted the driver and requested that a train check be conducted.

Post incident static testing performed by the RTO, has shown that it is possible to maintain brake pipe pressure on the lead locomotive if sufficient main reservoir air pressure can be maintained. This testing was performed on both 26L and EPIC type brake instruments with the same results.

### **The following action is to be taken:**

Rail Transport Operators need to be aware of the potential for this situation to occur and conduct a risk assessment on their operations to assess the effectiveness of current safety defences to ensure the risk of having a similar incident does not exist. Priority should be given to train operations in dark territory operation which does not have track circuited protection.

Where organisations are not utilising safety features such as end of train telemetry devices the fitment of such equipment should be considered as part of the risk assessment process. End of Train Monitors not only provide additional information to the driver but also provide additional assurance that trains are complete during operation and when fulfilling train authorities.

For further information, contact Clive Weaire on (08) 9216 8519