

Frequently Asked Questions: Interoperability of railway operations

Question	Answer
What are the new interoperability requirements?	<p>The new requirements are contained in the Rail Safety National Law Regulations 2012 under regulation 16 and 20A of Schedule 1.</p> <p>The regulations require rail transport operators whose railway operations are undertaken on, or form part of, the National Network for Interoperability (NNI) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a new element in their Safety Management System – <i>Interoperability of railway operations</i> - for the identification and consideration of interoperability matters when planning or implementing changes to their railway operations on the NNI • prepare an interoperability management plan if interoperability matters are identified.
What is the National Network for Interoperability (NNI)?	<p>The NNI defines the rail lines which carry interstate freight and passenger services connecting major ports and passenger terminals throughout Australia. The description of the NNI is published in the South Australian Government Gazette and is available on ONRSR's website. An interactive map of the NNI is also available on the National Transport Commission website.</p>
Why were the interoperability requirements introduced?	<p>The National Transport Commission (NTC) is delivering the National Rail Action Plan to advance interoperability across Australia's rail system. This national rail reform is a priority for all Australian governments and National Cabinet.</p> <p>The NTC's review of the Rail Safety National Law has indicated that overarching interoperability provisions should be included in the law, which will be considered in the longer term as part of a broader legislative reform process.</p> <p>As a first step to advancing interoperability, the Rail Safety National Law National Regulations 2012 were amended to require rail transport operators on the NNI to consider interoperability matters when planning changes to their railway operations on that network.</p>
Who needs to comply with the new interoperability requirements?	<p>Only those accredited rail transport operators that receive a written notice from the Regulator determining that their railway operations are undertaken on, or form part of, the National Network for Interoperability.</p>
My organisation does not currently operate on the National Network for Interoperability (NNI) so why have we received a letter from the Regulator advising that we must comply with the new	<p>The Regulator's determination is based on each organisation's current permissions under their accreditation. If the organisations' accreditation authorises railway operations to be undertaken on the NNI, even if that authority is currently not being exercised, these organisations will need to comply with the new interoperability requirements. The reason for this is that while these organisations may not currently be undertaking operations on the NNI, they are authorised to do so.</p>

interoperability requirements?	The new interoperability requirements do not apply to changes to railway operations that are not on the NNI.
Do tourist and heritage operators need to comply with the interoperability requirements?	Rail transport operators that are determined by the Regulator to be a tourist and heritage operator for the purpose of regulation 20A of Schedule 1 of the Rail Safety National Law National Regulations 2012 are exempt from the new interoperability requirements.
How is a tourist and heritage operator determined for the purpose of being exempt from the new interoperability requirements?	<p>The Regulator will determine which rail transport operators are tourist and heritage operators for the purpose of the new interoperability requirements and record their names on the National Rail Safety Register.</p> <p>The Regulator will consider the following criteria in making the determination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The status of the operator - Non-profit company registered with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) or an unincorporated association or incorporated association registered under state or territory legislation • Whether the operator receives financial support towards their railway operations from state and territory governments, as a Community Service Obligation. • The nature and scope of operations, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ does the railway principally involve the restoration, preservation or operation of heritage rolling stock? ○ is the purpose of the railway to recreate historical railway experiences? ○ is the railway operated for enjoyment by the public?
Will this new requirement impact work already underway?	No, it is not intended to stop any work underway, particularly changes that will improve safety, but operators will now need to consider interoperability impacts of the work if it involves changes to railway operations on the National Network for Interoperability.
Can the requirement to consider interoperability be integrated into existing safety management system (SMS) elements such as the management of change management?	<p>No. To ensure that rail transport operators have specific systems and procedures for the consideration of interoperability, the Interoperability of railway operations Guideline sees a standalone element of the safety management system being developed.</p> <p>Operators should also consider whether other elements of the SMS, such as management of change, should be updated for interoperability.</p>
Will this new requirement mean interface agreements need to be updated?	It is possible that interface agreements will need to be updated as a result of considering interoperability, particularly where an interoperability matter has been identified.
Can an operator have one Interoperability Management Plan (IMP) to cover all changes on the National Network for Interoperability (NNI).	Each change to railway operations on the NNI is likely to have different interoperability impacts. Therefore, under the Interoperability of Railway Operations Guideline, any change to railway operations on the NNI that has interoperability impacts will require a separate IMP.

<p>Is there a template available for an Interoperability Management Plan?</p>	<p>ONRSR has not developed a template at this time. RTOs have the flexibility to develop IMPs best suited to the specific change to their railway operations.</p> <p>The guideline provides guidance on what should be included in an IMP depending on the level of interoperability impacts associated with the change to railway operations.</p>
<p>Where do I find information about rail transport operators that form part of the NNI, or operate on the NNI?</p>	<p>ONRSR will include all accredited rail transport operators that operate on, or form part of, the NNI on the National Rail Safety Register.</p>