

# Safety Management System Modules

## Element 22 – Safety Interface Coordination

### What and Why

Safety Interface Coordination is the process by which the activities of two (or more) organisations at an identified location are managed to ensure the safety of railway operations.

An Interface Agreement is a document that describes all the arrangements that are in place where this occurs. Examples are:

- Where a rolling stock operator operates on another's infrastructure (and vice versa);
- Level crossings;
- Road Crossings (public with Councils) or (private with landowners).

Many organisations have different names for the same type of document - An Interface Agreement is the same as an Interface Coordination Plan, a Safety Interface Coordination Plan and a Safety Interface Agreement.

Where interfaces exist, both (or all) parties come together to jointly assess the risks of the interaction of their operations. An Interface Agreement is the document which:

- Describes the interaction between the two or more organisations;
- The risks arising from that interaction;
- The ways in which those risks are managed;
- The responsibilities of each party (in other words which party is responsible for implementing each risk control);
- Provides the contact details of each party so each can report items requiring attention to each other;

Details the way in which the risks and the way in which they are controlled are periodically reviewed.

### How

A procedure in the SMS should describe how safety interfaces are developed, managed, and reviewed.

This may include:

- A simple process for developing an Interface Agreement;
- A template document to be used as an Interface Agreement;
- The requirement to perform a risk assessment on the activities that occur at the interface location in line with the operator's risk management procedures;
- A numbering convention for Interface Agreements;
- A statement that describes how often they are to be reviewed. Interface agreements that are unlikely to change may have a longer review period than those that will;
- Details of if or when Interface Agreements may be included in audit schedules.

Operators are required to have a register that includes the details of all Interface Agreements.

In the case of level crossings, an Interface Agreement would be established between the road owner and the rail infrastructure manager (RIM) and would cover items such as:

- Description/identification of each level crossing;
- An assessment of the risks presented by the level crossing;
- Agreement on the type of protection provided at each level crossing (active/passive);
- Who is responsible for maintaining sight lines (a) in the rail corridor (b) the road corridor (e.g. vegetation control);
- Who is responsible for maintaining level crossing signs (a) at the level crossing (b) in advance of the level crossing;
- The boundaries for responsibility for maintaining the road surface;
- Who is responsible for maintaining road markings;
- What co-ordination is required when road works are required in the vicinity of the railway (and vice versa);
- Contact details of each party;
- Details of how often/when the agreement is reviewed.

## Who

RIM's, private road owners and councils have mandatory obligations under the law to have interface agreements in place. Managers and Supervisors may have responsibility for ensuring that Interface Agreements are in place prior to commencement of operations.

The operator may include responsibilities for Interface Agreements in position/role descriptions;

The Executive Committee/Board may wish to endorse and approve Interface Agreements as part of their governance obligations.

The most senior person may wish to sign Interface Agreements as a representative of the operator.

Some operators obtain multiple signatories for Interface Agreements – operations, safety and governance.

## When

Ideally, Interface Agreements should be in place prior to the commencement of operations.

Interface Agreements should be reviewed consistent with the timeframes provided in safety management system procedures, or when changes occur at the interface.

## List of relevant documents (internal)

Element - 16 Risk Management

Interface Agreement Template

Example Interface Agreement Register

## Links (external)

[ONRSR Website – Interface Agreements](#)

[ONRSR Website – Fact Sheet for Interface Agreements for Road Managers](#)

[ONRSR Website – Using the Interface Agreement Template](#)

[Transport for NSW – Interface Agreements](#)

## Appendices

A. [Example Safety Interface Agreement Register](#)