

Safety Management System Modules

Element 23 – Management of Notifiable Occurrences

What and Why

Details of what notifiable occurrences must be reported and when can be found in Regulation 57, and in Schedule 1A of the Regulations. There are a number of obligations that must be demonstrated by an accredited rail transport operator, and these also link with several other elements of the SMS, including, but not limited to, drug and alcohol management, corrective actions, and performance measurement.

For ease, references are included here, and details of the obligations will be included in each relevant element.

The notifiable occurrences prescribed by the RSNL are set out in the ONRSR Notifiable Occurrence Reporting Requirements guideline (available on ONRSR's website).

The obligations for all accredited operators are to have procedures in their SMS that:

- describe how they manage the scene of a notifiable occurrence
- advise how evidence is to be preserved;
- include how and when to report notifiable occurrences;
- provide instructions on how to determine which occurrences to investigate and how investigations are to be held.

Larger more complex operators will often split this element into two (2) components – Notifiable Occurrences and Incident Coordination.

Where operators share a network managed by another Rail Infrastructure Manager (RIM), they may be required under the conditions of their Access Agreements to adopt and comply with the RIMs procedures for incident coordination.

Regardless of where operators operate, they have an obligation to self-report all notifiable occurrences. That is, when operating on a RIMs network, two reports should be received by ONRSR – one from the RIM and one from the operator.

Where an operator is a RIM and a rolling stock operator, *only one report* is required.

How

Depending on the category of occurrence, the initial report may be verbal with a written report, or only a written report. Written reports are submitted to ONRSR via the ONRSR portal. The data that must be included is set out in the ONRSR Occurrence Data Submission Requirements guideline.

A procedure has been included in the SMS that describes how notifiable occurrences are managed, that includes information on:

- What a notifiable occurrence is;
- The details of the categories of occurrence;
- The process to report Category A, Category B and Category C occurrences, including timeframes to

report these;

- The 24/7 contact number for immediately reporting Category A occurrences;
- Details for reporting are included on noticeboards;
- Representatives who report occurrences understand the process to report them to ONRSR;
- Include a mechanism for occurrence reporting within the operations to prevent duplication of reporting – such as an incident reporting matrix;
- When drug and alcohol (D&A) testing is required;
- Who to contact to arrange D&A testing post incident;
- How and when to secure the incident site;
- How to determine if an investigation is required;
- The process to investigate an occurrence;
- the appropriate skills required by investigators to conduct impartial just culture investigations;
- the format and content of investigation reports;
- To whom the results are reported;
- How corrective actions are prioritised; and
- How corrective actions are tracked until resolved.

The organisation is receiving and acting on incident and near-hit reports received from all personnel and stakeholders.

An incident register/list is kept up to date. An example spreadsheet is included as Appendix A.

Staff are trained and aware of their internal reporting responsibilities (and external if they are to report to ONRSR). For example, induction includes going through the process of what that person must do if there is a notifiable occurrence.

Procedures for determining what incidents will be investigated by the operator, preserving evidence and determining who will conduct the investigation.

A nominated liaison with external investigators is determined, if necessary.

Corrective actions are registered and followed through.

Procedures specify who is to receive the investigation report and/or present to the Board/Executive Committee.

All investigation statements and information remain confidential, any learnings from the investigation shared across the organisation, and a just (no blame) culture exists across the operations.

Executive Committee/Board reports include details of notifiable occurrences, as well as a status on any actions by ONRSR and any corrective actions that are ongoing or completed;

A culture exists where Rail Safety Workers (including volunteers and contractors) remain on site until all post incident actions such as testing, statement writing, and initial interviews are completed.

A training course for statement writing has been developed and delivered to relevant people.

New risks or emerging trends established as part of investigations are reflected in the organisations risk register and associated risk assessments.

Who

All operators are expected to review all notifiable occurrences and decide on which they will investigate to and identify corrective actions to prevent re-occurrence.

Operators may elect to have a single point of contact, who is responsible for reporting occurrences to ONRSR, and this may be part of job/role descriptions.

Investigators have the necessary skills and tools to conduct a root cause investigation.

ONRSR may ask an operator to provide a copy of the investigation report and follow up the implementation of corrective actions.

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) or ONRSR (or both) may decide to conduct their own investigations, in addition to the operator's.

All Rail Safety Workers understand their post incident obligations in relation to drug and /or alcohol management.

All Rail Safety Workers understand the process that is to be followed after a notifiable occurrence.

All Rail Safety Workers have received appropriate training in statement writing.

Any reports requested by ONRSR are endorsed by the Executive Committee/ Board prior to submission.

All persons involved in the occurrence provide written statements about their own experience of the occurrence.

When

Those notifiable occurrences that are Category A must be immediately notified by telephone to ONRSR on **1800 430 888 (24 hours / 7 days)** with a follow up written notification to ONRSR within 7 days of becoming aware of the incident.

Drug and alcohol testing is to be conducted for specific Category A occurrences which are subject to mandatory post-incident testing within three (3) hours of the occurrence unless testing has been undertaken by a police office or the Regulator. The occurrences are:

- Collision (excluding attempted or suspected self-harm incidents)
- Derailment
- Proceed Authority Exceeded
- Runaway
- Network Rule or Procedure Breach
- Person / Train Interface

Category B occurrences must be notified in writing to ONRSR within 72hrs of becoming aware of the incident.

Category C occurrences should be submitted to ONRSR annually via the ONRSR Portal prior to the due date for the Safety Performance Report (which is on the notice of accreditation), with an overview included in the Safety Performance Report.

Investigation interviews are conducted as soon as possible to ensure all details are captured.

List of relevant documents (internal)

Element 5 - Management Responsibility accountabilities and authorities

Element 9 – Safety Performance Measures

Element 11 – Corrective Actions

Element 16 – Risk Management

Element 24 – Rail Safety Worker Competence

Element 25 – Security Management

Element 26 – Emergency Management

Element 28 – Drug and Alcohol Management

Procedure for Notifiable Occurrences

Investigation report template

Position /Role Descriptions

Training /Competency matrix

Safety induction

Corrective Actions procedures

D&A Management Plan

Links (external)

ONRSR Webpage – Reporting a Notifiable Occurrence (available from www.onrsr.com.au)

Appendices

A. Example Notifiable Occurrence Spreadsheet (available from www.onrsr.com.au)

Appendix A – Example notifiable occurrence spreadsheet

	Collision (including near hit collision)	Derailment	Wrong side failure	Proceed authority exceeded (including SPADs)	Runaway	Fire, explosion or dangerous goods spill	Network rule or procedure breach	Load irregularity	Rolling stock irregularity (incl monitoring systems)	Level crossing irregularity	Track irregularity	Civil infrastructure irregularity	Electrical traction irregularity	Person/ train interface	Fatality or serious injury	Incident directly threatening safety
July																
August																
September																
October																
November																
December																
January																
February																
March																
April																
May																
June																
Total																

How to Use

- Enter the number of notifiable occurrences for the month as they occur.
- Consider adding a comment using the Review Tab so that further details of the occurrence is visible.
- Consider a numbering system for any notifiable occurrences to assist with filing (eg 001/2020)
- Graphs are in the Graphs Tab
- Graphs will be automatically updated as data is entered into the "Occurrence Data" tab
- A new spreadsheet can be created for each year by "saving as" and deleting the previous year's data
- Data from this spreadsheet can assist with the preparation of the Safety Performance Report