

REVISION OF ON-S1 IMPLEMENTATION OF ON-S1 (Revision 2)

Background

Triggered by a desktop assessment of the application of ON-S1 a review has been undertaken to improve the guidance provided in the document to achieve a greater level of consistency by its users.

The current version of Occurrence Notification Standard One (ON-S1), dated August 2004 has been used both to guide the notification of rail safety occurrences and to inform the classification of occurrences under a uniform national data set, using a 'top-event' approach.

It has been recognised by Rail Safety Regulators and rail industry participants that confusion over these two purposes for the document has contributed in some cases to inconsistent reporting and poor data quality. The ongoing maintenance of a single document as the primary reference for both of these purposes also introduced ongoing tensions in terms of the content and format of the document.

As part of the review, a separate Occurrence Classification Guideline, which defines the 'top-event' classification framework that is current used to nationally report occurrences, has been created. This then enabled the further review of ON-S1 to produce a document that is focused on the provision of guidance on the notification of occurrences, incorporating descriptions of the type of occurrence that needs to be notified and the level of information (data) that needs to be provided to the Rail Safety Regulator.

The two documents are now issued as follows:

- ON-S1 revision 2 Occurrence Notification Standard
- OC-G1 version 1 Occurrence Classification Guideline

Implementation

Both ON-S1 and OC-G1 are effective from 1 July 2008.

Reporting of Notifiable Occurrences

Rail organisations are required to report notifiable occurrences to the relevant Rail Safety Regulator in accordance with the relevant jurisdictional legislation or conditions of accreditation imposed by the Regulator. ON-S1 revision 2 has not significantly changed the scope of occurrences that were reportable under the previous version and it not intended to override the notification requirements set-out in the relevant jurisdictional legislation.

The reporting of notifiable occurrences with reference to ON-S1 (in terms of the type of occurrence to be reported and the extent of information to be provided) will commence on 1 July 2008. Notifications after that date that do not contain the required information or do not align with the guidance provided may be questioned by the Rail Safety Regulator and be subject to requests for further information or clarification.

The manner in which the required information is to be provided is not specified, particularly in view of the various methods for the submission of notifiable occurrence reports that are currently employed. Rail transport operators should consult with the relevant Rail Safety Regulator on appropriate and acceptable methods for the submission of the required data in relation to notifiable occurrences.

Classification of Notifiable Occurrences

From 1 July 2008, any national classification of rail safety occurrences should be undertaken in accordance with OC-G1, including where a Rail Safety Regulator has requested a rail organisation to provide a classification as part of a report of a notifiable occurrence.

It is not anticipated that immediate amendments to rail organisations' databases or rail safety data management systems will be required and that organisations may:

- classify notifiable occurrences within their system using OC-G1 categories and provide this classification as part of the notification to the Regulator;
- devise a lookup table (or similar) to convert their own classification systems to OC-G1 classifications for reporting to the Regulator; or
- not provide a classification of the occurrence as part of the notification, with classifications being undertaken by the Rail Safety Regulator.

The most appropriate action should be determined in consultation with the relevant Regulator(s).

Notifications received from 1 July 2008 that are classified against ON-S1 Version 1 will be re-classified under OC-G1 by the Rail Safety Regulator, where there is a difference. Rail organisations that publish their own data against the national classification standard will need to modify their systems in due course to remain aligned with the data that may be published by Rail Safety Regulators.

National Publication of Notifiable Occurrences

The modification of databases and other data management systems is expected to be undertaken progressively and it is acknowledged that full compliance with the OC-G1 Version 1 may not be achieved for some time for both the rail industry organisations and for Rail Safety Regulators. Rail Safety Regulators will use best endeavours to modify their databases and systems to ensure that data published under a 'top-event' framework are classified to OC-G1.

Critically, statistics on a number of notifiable occurrences are currently published by the ATSB on a bi-annual basis. A re-classification of these statistics for occurrences that occurred prior to 1 July 2008 will not be undertaken. Occurrence data being published prior to 1 July 2008 will continue to be published against the classification framework set-out in ON-S1 Version 1 (with modification to separate running line and yard collisions and derailments) unless otherwise indicated.

Nationally published data on notifiable occurrences that are identified in the ATSB publication, "Australian Rail Safety Occurrence Data, January 2001 to December 2007, Rail Safety Statistics" (and later versions) will be in reference on OC-G1 Version for any period commencing 1 July 2008 or later.

Future Review

The national management of rail safety data will be subject to further review as part of the development of a National Rail Safety Data Strategy, being managed by the National Transport Commission. Already identified in the draft strategy paper to be considered by State and Territory Transport Ministers are proposed actions to review the reporting, classification and publication of notifiable occurrences.

These actions will have further implications on the structure and content of the ON-S1 and OC-G1 documents. Therefore, while the timely transition to the use of these documents (and appropriate accommodation of changes into databases) is encouraged, any amendment of databases and other rail safety data management systems to align to the new ON-S1 and OC-G1 documents should balance the cost of doing so against the potential for these documents to change in the near future.

Further Information

Any queries that you may have on the ON-S1 and OC-G1 documents, their implementation of proposed changes to rail safety databases can be directed to any of the State or Territory Rail Safety Regulators.