Early engagement with RSSB or your standards committee member can increase the likelihood of the lead standards committee approving the application at the first meeting.

**What happens after the standards committee meeting?**

It will take up to 20 working days from the date the application is approved by the lead standards committee to you receiving the deviation certificate; if you need the certificate quicker than this, you can agree this at the standards committee meeting.

It is your responsibility to advise affected parties (with whom you will have previously consulted) of the standards committee’s decision. If the application is approved, these parties may need to change their procedures to align with the specific alternative provisions in the deviation certificate.

**How long will the deviation last for?**

A deviation can be permanent or where relevant have a specified duration. The duration of the deviation can be tailored to the needs of the rail industry and is no longer restricted to one year. The standards committee takes the final decision on the duration of the deviation.

Remember that the deviation is against the requirement in the RGS that was in force at the time you applied for the deviation, and applies to the scope stated on the certificate. If the requirement in the RGS is subsequently changed, you do not have to re-apply for a deviation for things within the scope of the certificate.

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**Further information**

You can find more information on items mentioned in this leaflet:

- Guidance on deviation applications – the RSSB website (www.rssb.co.uk)
- The process for applying for deviations (including examples of applications) – the RSSB website (www.rssb.co.uk)
- The Consultation and Stakeholder Register website (www.consultation.rssb.co.uk)
- The leaflet in this series on ‘Industry Committees dealing with standards’.

All leaflets in this series are available on the RSSB website.

Any feedback on this leaflet? Please let us know at: standardsleaflets@rssb.co.uk
Introduction

This leaflet is about how to apply for a deviation from a Railway Group Standard (RGS). It may be of particular interest to:

- People who manage projects in the rail industry.
- The managers of rail industry staff who carry out operational duties set out in National Operations Publications.
- Manufacturers of rail industry parts, assets and vehicles.

What is a deviation?

A deviation is a permission to comply with a specific alternative provision to a requirement in an RGS, where it would be unreasonable to comply with the requirement. It is not a permission not to comply with a requirement in an RGS.

The content of an RGS may be appropriate for the large majority of locations or circumstances on the network but there could be a very good reason why it would be impracticable, or too costly, to comply at some locations or in some circumstances. In this situation, you can seek authority, via the deviation, to do something different to that set out in the RGS. A deviation can be thought of as a ‘locally specific requirement’.

Who can apply for a deviation?

Anyone who is required to comply with RGs, or who may reasonably be expected to comply with RGs in the future, can apply for a deviation.

Applications are no longer restricted to members of RSSB or companies that have the support of a member of RSSB. The application should be supported by the individual who has professional responsibility for the subject area concerned within the organisation that has to comply with, or may be expected to comply with, the RGS. The individual should also have the authority to make commitments on behalf of that organisation in respect of issues related to the requirements in the RGS from which they wish to deviate.

How can I apply for a deviation?

You can apply for a deviation by completing a deviation application form which is available from the RSSB website. The completed form together with any supporting information should be submitted to RSSB electronically at proposalsanddeviations rssb.co.uk or as a signed copy to Head of Standards Management at RSSB.

When do I apply for a deviation?

You should apply for a deviation:

- As soon as you are aware of the need, and you have decided what the proposed alternative provisions should be, and
- You are confident that you can demonstrate why the proposed alternative provisions are reasonable through suitable and sufficient supporting analysis and consultation with other affected parties.

You are required to consult affected parties; this helps in the identification of shared risks and agreement of the way to control them. As a result of consultation, you may revise the proposed alternative provisions and the affected parties may agree to implement the alternative measures in order to control the shared risks.

Deviations will be considered by the ‘lead’ standards committee, usually at the next available meeting. To help you submit applications in time, the meeting dates for standards committees and the dates that deviation applications need to arrive at RSSB are published on the RSSB website. Applications are generally required a minimum of 15 working days in advance of the meeting of the lead standards committee.

You may be invited to the standards committee meeting(s) to discuss the application.

The lead standards committee has primary responsibility for a particular RGS.

How can I get help with my deviation application?

If you are uncertain about aspects of your deviation application, you can seek advice before you submit the application from your industry constituency member who sits on the lead standards committee or from RSSB.

Contact with your standards committee member can be made via RSSB; details are available from the RSSB website.

What happens to my deviation application?

Your deviation application will be considered by the lead standards committee but it may also need to be considered by one or more other standards committees (the ‘support’ standards committees).

A support standards committee is one that has an interest in the content of a particular RGS.

Standards committees will assess:

- How the proposed alternative provisions will manage the risk to an acceptable level.
- Whether the deviation adversely affects the long-term technical compatibility of the railway system.
- The agreement of affected parties consulted by the applicant.
- Whether further consultation is needed.

Standards committees can either approve a deviation application without change, or modify it (with your agreement) prior to approval, or reject it.

The vast majority of applications are approved. Excluding applications that are withdrawn by the applicant, 98.5% of applications are approved by the lead standards committee.

In some cases, applications are not approved at the first meeting. This could be because the committee may need more information on the issues outlined above.