

Infrastructure Requirements for Personal Safety in Respect of Clearances and Access

Synopsis

This document sets out the design, construction and maintenance requirements for means of access onto, along or across running lines that are provided for authorised people. It specifies the requirements for physical measures for the control of risks to authorised people from moving rail vehicles and from tripping hazards.

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Infrastructure Requirements for Personal Safety in Respect of Clearances and Access

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Part A

Issue Record

This document will be updated when necessary by distribution of a complete replacement.

Issue	Date	Comments
One	April 1996	Original Document.
Two	November 1997	Reviewed to remove control measures for non-railway system risks and to add the requirements for authorised walking routes. Also supersedes GO/OTC506.
Three	February 2001	Revised document, incorporating requirements for speeds up to 140 mph.

Revisions have not been marked by a vertical black line in this issue because the document has been revised throughout.

Technical Content

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Responsibilities

Railway Group Standards are mandatory on all members of the Railway Group * and apply to all relevant activities that fall into the scope of each individual's Railway Safety Case. If any of those activities are performed by a contractor, the contractor's obligation in respect of Railway Group Standards is determined by the terms of the contract between the respective parties. Where a contractor is a duty holder of a Railway Safety Case then Railway Group Standards apply directly to the activities described in the Safety Case.

* The railway group comprises Railtrack PLC, Railway Safety, and the train and station operators who hold railway safety cases for operation on or related to infrastructure controlled by Railtrack PLC.

Compliance

The provisions in this document are to be complied with from 07 April 2001 unless otherwise noted.

Sections 5.5 (Locking of access gates), 5.9 (Prevention of access when accesses are taken out of use), 6.10 (Marking of **refuges**) and 9 (Provision of warning signs) of this document apply to existing locations.

Sections 5.2, 6.2 and 7.2 (on records to be kept) apply to existing locations and are to be complied with from 06 April 2002.

Sections 5.8, 6.12, 7.4 and 8.4 (on inspection and maintenance) apply to existing locations. The procedures required by these sections are to be in place by 06 April 2002.

Section 6.11 (Special requirements for tunnels) applies to existing locations and is to be complied with from 03 April 2004.

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Other sections of this document apply where:

- a) new access facilities are provided.
- b) existing access facilities are reconstructed or significantly altered.
- c) the permissible or enhanced permissible speed is increased above 100 mph.
- d) the permissible or enhanced permissible speed is increased by an amount that requires new protection arrangements (for example, the use of a distant lookout) because of the increase in warning time required.
- e) the extent of bi-directional running is increased.

Access facilities include access points, **cess** walkways, continuous positions of safety, **refuges**, authorised walking routes and accesses to individual railway structures or installations including signal post telephones.

The requirements of section 10 of GC/RT5203 Issue Two are to be revised and transferred to [GE/RT8025](#) (publication planned for June 2000). Until [GE/RT8025](#) is published, section 10 of GC/RT5203 Issue Two remains mandatory.

Any Railway Group member deviating from the requirements set out in this document shall ensure that the situation is regularised in accordance with the requirements of [GA/RT6001](#), [GA/RT6004](#), or [GA/RT6006](#).

Health and Safety Responsibilities

In issuing this document, Railway Safety makes no warranties, express or implied, that compliance with all or any documents published by Railway Safety is sufficient on its own to ensure safe systems of work or operation. Each user is reminded of its own responsibilities to ensure health and safety at work and its individual duties under health and safety legislation.

Supply

Controlled and uncontrolled copies of this document may be obtained from the Industry Safety Liaison Dept, Railway Safety, Evergreen House, 160 Euston Road, London NW1 2DX.

Railway Group Standard

GC/RT5203

Issue Three

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Part B

1 Purpose

This document sets out the design, construction and maintenance requirements for means of access onto, along or across running lines that are provided for authorised people. It specifies the requirements for physical measures for the control of risks to authorised people from moving rail vehicles and from tripping hazards.

2 Scope

The overall scope of Railway Group Standards is specified in Appendix A of [GA/RT6001](#).

This document contains requirements which are applicable to the duty holders of the Infrastructure Controller category of Railway Safety Case.

This document applies to all facilities providing access onto and about Railtrack controlled infrastructure for authorised people, including authorised walking routes.

This document's validity is limited to running lines with permissible or enhanced permissible speeds up to and including 140 mph.

This document does not include requirements for facilities providing access between sidings or requirements for the spacing of sidings.

This document does not include requirements for the control of risks from electrification systems, which are set out in other Railway Group Standards.

This document does not include requirements for occupation, accommodation and barrow level crossings, which are set out in other Railway Group Standards.

The circumstances under which access along the railway is permitted whilst trains are running are set out in [GO/RT3000](#).

3 Definitions

Access Point

A designated point where authorised people may gain access to the railway, usually by means of a lockable gate in the railway boundary fence.

Authorised Walking Route

A designated route providing pedestrian access to and egress from places of work (including booking on points and stabling points) and which is suitable for use by people not certificated as competent in personal track safety.

Cess

The space adjacent to a running line but not the space between running lines.

Cess Walkway

A designated **walkway** along the **cess** where people certificated as competent in personal track safety may walk safely while trains pass.

Continuous Position of Safety

A position of safety is considered to be continuous if it is not interrupted by obstructions that are greater than 2m in length. See 'position of safety'.

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Immediate Access

Cess walkways and positions of safety are considered to have 'immediate access' from running lines if all the following conditions are met:

- a) They are positioned directly adjacent to the running lines.
- b) They are not more than 0.5m above or below the top of adjacent sleepers.
- c) There are no intervening obstacles between them and the running lines.

Lineside

The area between the railway boundary fence and the area defined as on or near the line. See 'on or near the line'.

On or Near the Line

Generally, anywhere within a distance of 3m from the nearest rail of any running line. A full definition is given in [GO/RT3000](#).

Permissible or Enhanced Permissible Speed

The maximum speed published in the Sectional Appendix at which traffic is allowed to run on a line.

Position of Safety

A place where people may stand safely while trains pass. This can be continuous or discrete. Positions of safety are not for use when trains are running at permissible or enhanced permissible speeds greater than 125 mph. See also 'continuous position of safety' and 'refuge'.

Refuge

A specially constructed recess providing a discrete position of safety where a continuous position of safety is not provided. See 'position of safety'.

4 Principles

This document supports HMRI Railway Safety Principle 3:

There should be adequate clearances, so that where operational procedures permit people onto the infrastructure while trains are operating, they can carry out their duties in safety.

5 Access to the Railway

5.1 Provision of access points

The siting of access points shall take into account:

- a) the need for access to running lines for emergency services.
- b) the need for access to running lines for maintenance staff and equipment.
- c) the risks relating to unwanted intrusions and unauthorised access.

Requirements for risk identification and assessment relating to unwanted intrusions and unauthorised access are given in [GC/RT5201](#), together with other general requirements for lineside security.

5.2 Records of access points

The infrastructure controller shall keep records of every access point to the railway. The record shall include as a minimum:

- a) the name of the access point, with the road name or number if applicable.
- b) a unique reference number for the access point.
- c) the route, mileage and the side of the railway on which the access point is located (indicated, for example, by the designation of the nearest track).

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- d) the Ordnance Survey grid reference of the access point.

The infrastructure controller shall make the records of access points available to those requiring the information.

The infrastructure controller shall consult the emergency services to determine the records of access points that need be made available to them.

5.3 Signing of access points to running lines

Access points shall be clearly signed to warn members of the public that access is prohibited and to make them aware that the railway is hazardous.

The following information shall be clearly marked at access points to running lines:

- a) The name of the access point.
- b) The unique reference number of the access point.
- c) The Ordnance Survey grid reference of the access point.
- d) The telephone number of the local control centre.

Section 9 gives additional requirements for warning signs at access points.

5.4 Clearances at access gates

Access gates shall open in such a manner that the clearance requirements for a continuous position of safety are met and at the same time provide a safe place for people to stand whilst opening or closing the gate.

5.5 Locking of access gates

Access gates shall be securely locked when not in use. The availability of keys or combination codes for the locks used shall take into account the possible authorised users of the access point, including maintenance personnel and emergency services.

5.6 Pathways to the lineside

Pathways to the lineside shall be clearly recognisable. Pathways shall be of sufficient width to meet their intended purpose, taking into account the tools and equipment which may need to be taken to the lineside. They shall not be less than 0.7m wide at any point.

Pathways shall be designed to help prevent people using them from falling or slipping. Handrails shall be provided where they would assist in meeting this objective.

Where steps or ramps lead directly to the lineside, a place of safety with a hard level surface shall be provided at the lineside end of the steps or ramp.

A barrier shall be provided at the end of pathways to prevent accidental access onto a running line.

5.7 Access routes to the lineside for road vehicles

Access routes to the lineside for road vehicles, provided for maintenance of the infrastructure, shall have areas at the end of the access routes for parking and turning vehicles.

Barriers shall be provided on bends and at parking and turning areas where there is a risk that road vehicles could accidentally compromise clearances to trains. The barriers shall be sufficient to prevent the accidental overrun of road vehicles onto the track.

5.8 Inspection and maintenance of accesses

The infrastructure controller shall have procedures for the inspection and maintenance of accesses. The procedures shall set out the required

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frequencies of inspection and the actions to be taken to maintain the accesses in a safe condition.

Records of inspections shall be made and kept for a minimum of 2 years.

5.9 Prevention of access when accesses are taken out of use

When an access to the running lines is to be taken out of use and no longer maintained, it shall be modified in such a way that it cannot be mistaken for an authorised access. Access gates shall be replaced with fencing or otherwise permanently secured in the closed position.

5.10 Temporary accesses

Where temporary accesses are provided (for example for construction works), they shall meet the requirements of sections 5.1, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7.

Temporary accesses shall be closed and fencing restored as soon as is practicable after they cease to be needed.

A temporary access that is required for longer than three months shall be treated as a permanent access.

Requirements for temporary vehicular level crossings are set out in [GO/RT3204](#).

6 Access Along the Railway

6.1 Provision of cess walkways

Where reasonably practicable, a continuous **cess walkway** shall be provided on at least one side of any railway where people are regularly permitted access on or near the line whilst trains are running.

It is permissible for the location of the **cess walkway** to change from one side of the running lines to the other where required. Points where the **cess walkway** changes sides shall be located where train sighting distances provide adequate time to cross the track. The location of points where the **cess walkway** changes sides shall be identified on site.

Points where the **cess walkway** changes sides shall not be located where the permissible or enhanced permissible speed exceeds 125 mph.

6.2 Records of cess walkways

The infrastructure controller shall keep records of all **cess walkways**.

The infrastructure controller shall make the records of **cess walkways** available to those requiring the information.

6.3 Provision of continuous positions of safety

Where reasonably practicable, a continuous position of safety shall be provided on each side of any railway where people are regularly permitted access on or near the line whilst trains are running. It is permissible to use a **cess walkway** as a continuous position of safety.

Where there are more than two running lines and it is reasonably practicable to do so, a continuous position of safety shall be provided between the running lines such that a continuous position of safety or refuge is accessible from anywhere by crossing only one running line.

6.4 Provision of refuges

Where reasonably practicable, **refuges** shall be provided where continuous positions of safety are separated by a distance of more than 40m.

Where **refuges** are provided on both sides of the running lines, they shall be staggered to provide an effective interval not exceeding 20m.

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Where **refuges** are provided on one side only, they shall be spaced at intervals not exceeding 20m.

Where there are more than two running lines and **refuges** are provided, the **refuges** shall be spaced at intervals not exceeding 20m if a continuous position of safety between the running lines is not available.

6.5 Location of **cess** walkways and continuous positions of safety relative to running lines

The dimensions given in this section apply to running lines where the swept envelope of vehicles approved to operate does not exceed 3020mm wide in normal operating mode. Where the swept envelope is greater than 3020mm wide, for example because of curvature, dimensions shall be increased to provide equivalent clearances to the swept envelope.

The distance between the nearest edge of **cess** walkways and the running edge of the nearest rail of any running line open to traffic shall be at least:

- a) 1.25m where the permissible or enhanced permissible speed of the nearest running line is 100 mph or less.
- b) 2m where the permissible or enhanced permissible speed of the nearest running line is above 100 mph but does not exceed 125 mph.
- c) 2.75m where the permissible or enhanced permissible speed of the nearest running line is above 125 mph.

The distance between the nearest edge of continuous positions of safety and the running edge of the nearest rail of any running line open to traffic shall be at least:

- a) 1.25m where the permissible or enhanced permissible speed of the nearest running line is 100 mph or less.
- b) 2m where the permissible or enhanced permissible speed of the nearest running line is above 100 mph.

Positions of safety are only for use when trains are running at speeds no greater than 125 mph.

Continuous positions of safety and **cess** walkways acting as continuous positions of safety shall provide immediate access (as defined in section 3) from the running line where practicable. Access ramps or steps from the side of the running lines shall be provided at intervals not exceeding those for **refuges** given in section 6.4 where the vertical position of a **cess walkway** or continuous position of safety is outside the limit specified in the definition of 'immediate access' given in section 3.

6.6 Alternative arrangement where the permissible or enhanced permissible speed exceeds 125 mph

Where the permissible or enhanced permissible speed is above 125 mph, it is permissible to reduce the clearance between the **cess walkway** and nearest running line from that shown in section 6.5 where a permanent safety barrier is provided between the **cess walkway** and the running line.

The barrier shall be 1m high, measured from the surface of the **walkway**, and at least 2m from the running edge of the nearest rail of the running line.

The design of the barrier shall take the following into account:

- a) The aerodynamic effects from passing trains.
- b) Access to and from running lines for maintenance staff and emergency services.

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- c) Access to the **cess walkway** in the case of emergency disembarkation of people from a train.

6.7 Requirements for **cess** walkways

Cess walkways shall have a hard level surface not less than 0.7m wide with a clear headroom of 2m.

Where there is insufficient space for **cess** paths between the track and signal posts, overhead line equipment masts and other individual structures or items of fixed equipment not exceeding 2m in length, the path shall pass behind the structure where practicable.

Cess walkways shall be free of tripping hazards.

6.8 Requirements for continuous positions of safety

Continuous positions of safety shall have a hard level surface not less than 0.4m wide with a clear headroom of 2m.

Where the continuous position of safety is between two running lines, or between a running line and a siding, it shall be at least 0.9m wide.

6.9 Requirements for **refuges**

Refuges shall provide a clear space with the following minimum dimensions:

- a) Height 2m.
- b) Width 1.4m.
- c) Depth 0.7m.

Refuges shall provide immediate access (as defined in section 3) from the running line.

Access ramps or steps from the side of the running line shall be provided where the vertical position of **refuges** is outside the limit specified in the definition of 'immediate access' given in section 3.

The floor of the refuge shall be a hard level surface capable of withstanding a load of at least 5kN/m².

Handholds shall be provided to help people keep their balance during the passage of trains where aerodynamic effects are a hazard.

6.10 Marking of **refuges**

Refuges shall be marked so that they are easily recognisable by the people who may need to use them by providing one or more of the following:

- a) Electric lighting.
- b) Reflective marker plates.
- c) Whitewashed edges.
- d) Other effective means of marking.

6.11 Special requirement for tunnels

Signs shall be provided at regular intervals in tunnels more than 120m long to indicate the direction and distance to the nearest cross-passage within the tunnel or exit point from the tunnel.

6.12 Inspection and maintenance of **cess** walkways and positions of safety

The infrastructure controller shall have procedures for the inspection and maintenance of **cess** walkways and positions of safety. The procedures shall set

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out the required frequencies of inspection and the actions to be taken to maintain the **cess** walkways and positions of safety in a safe condition.

Management requirements for the control of risks which arise due to the presence of vegetation are set out in [GC/RT5202](#). Hazards to be considered include encroachment of vegetation into, and obstruction of, positions of safety and **refuges**.

Records of inspections shall be made and kept for a minimum of 2 years.

7 Authorised Walking Routes

7.1 Provision of authorised walking routes

The preferred means of access to or egress from a place of work (including a booking on point or stabling point) on Railtrack controlled infrastructure shall be by footpaths, roadways or other means designated for use by members of the public or railway passengers. Where this is not practicable, an authorised walking route shall be provided which minimises the risk to users from moving trains, for example by fencing the walking route.

[GO/RT3000](#) provides an exemption from the requirement to hold a personal track safety certificate for users of authorised walking routes. This exemption shall be taken into account when assessing the risks to users arising from possible routes and when determining appropriate control measures to minimise the risks.

7.2 Records of authorised walking routes

The infrastructure controller shall keep records of all authorised walking routes.

The infrastructure controller shall make the records of authorised walking routes available to those requiring the information.

7.3 Authorised walking routes crossing running lines and sidings

Where authorised walking routes cross running lines and sidings, the crossing shall be as nearly at right angles to the railway as is practicable.

Where the ballast shoulder is high, steps or ramps shall be provided to give access to the crossing surface. The surface shall be made up to rail level if there is heavy regular use of the crossing. Elsewhere it is permissible for the crossing to be at sleeper level. Where the crossing surface is made up to rail level, the design of the crossing surface shall ensure flangeway gaps are maintained.

The surfaces of crossings shall be free from abrupt changes of level and tripping hazards and provide a firm footing for pedestrians.

The sighting time of approaching trains shall be assessed. Where necessary, protection in the form of telephones or warning lights shall be provided. Requirements for crossings when such protection is provided are given in other Railway Group Standards.

7.4 Inspection and maintenance of authorised walking routes

The infrastructure controller shall have procedures for the inspection and maintenance of authorised walking routes. The procedures shall set out the required frequencies of inspection and the actions to be taken to maintain the authorised walking routes in a safe condition.

Records of inspections shall be made and kept for a minimum of 2 years.

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8 Access to Individual Railway Structures and Installations

8.1 Access to individual railway structures and installations

Accesses shall be designed so that people using them are not at risk from moving trains. Where this is not possible, the use of the access points shall be prohibited when trains are running.

Where there is a significant likelihood of people stepping foul of the running line when accessing lineside premises or equipment, permanent safety barriers 1m high shall be provided where practicable between the lineside premises or equipment and the adjacent running line. The barriers shall be a minimum 2m from the nearest running edge of the nearest rail.

Where practicable, doors shall not open out onto the **cess**. Where doors do open out onto the **cess**, consideration shall be given to providing a means of securing the door in the open position where risks may otherwise arise from the aerodynamic effects of passing trains.

8.2 Access for train crew to signal post telephones and other locations on or near the line

A **walkway** shall be provided on the approach to signal post telephones. The **walkway** shall be long enough to cover the positions of cab doors of all trains stopping at the signal post telephone, but shall not be less than 8m long.

The **walkway** shall have a hard level surface not less than 0.5m wide. The surface of the **walkway** shall be no lower than the top of the adjacent sleepers and no higher than the top of the adjacent rail. Where practicable, the clearances to the **walkway** shall meet the requirements for **cess** walkways set out in section 6.5.

Similar provision shall be made at other locations where train crews regularly need to go on or near the line, having alighted from trains.

Requirements for the positioning of signal post telephones are given in [GK/RT0037](#).

8.3 Permanent access ladders

Permanent access ladders accessed at running line level shall enable the user to face on-coming rail traffic wherever practicable. On bi-directional lines where there is a significant difference in traffic levels, the ladders shall enable the user to face traffic from the predominant direction.

8.4 Inspection and maintenance of accesses

The infrastructure controller shall have procedures for the inspection and maintenance of accesses to individual railway structures and installations. The procedures shall set out the required frequencies of inspection and the actions to be taken to maintain the accesses in a safe condition.

Records of inspections shall be made and kept for a minimum of 2 years.

9 Provision of Warning Signs

The continuous positions of safety, **refuges** and **cess** walkways referred to in this section are those meeting the requirements of section 6.

9.1 General requirements for warning signs at obstructions

Warning signs shall be provided at obstructions as required in sections 9.2, 9.3, and 9.4. They shall be orientated to face people walking along the running lines, at each end of the obstruction and any intermediate access points to the running lines, including the ends of platforms.

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If appropriate, additional signs shall be provided at intervals of not more than 40m along the obstruction, oriented to face the running line.

The warning signs shall be at eye height above **walkway** level wherever practicable.

Only one of the types of the warning signs described in sections 9.2, 9.3 and 9.4 is to be provided at any one location.

Warning signs shall not be provided where the obstruction is a station platform.

The signs are illustrated, and their meanings explained, in [GO/RT3000](#). Details of the signs, including the readability requirements, are set out in [GK/RT0033](#).

9.2 Provision of 'limited clearance' warning signs

'Limited clearance' warning signs shall be provided where a continuous position of safety is interrupted for a distance of more than 2m and the criteria for 'no refuge' or 'prohibition' warning signs in sections 9.3 and 9.4 are not applicable.

9.3 Provision of 'no refuges' warning signs

'No **refuges**' warning signs shall be provided at locations meeting all of the following criteria:

- a) Continuous positions of safety or **refuges** are not provided on the side of the running line in question.
- b) There are continuous positions of safety or **refuges** on the opposite side of the running lines.
- c) The criteria for 'prohibition' warning signs in section 9.4 are not applicable.

9.4 Provision of 'prohibition' warning signs

'Prohibition' warning signs shall be provided at the following locations:

- a) Where there is not adequate time to reach a continuous position of safety or refuge due to sighting distances or other reasons.
- b) Where it is not possible to set up a safe system of work while trains are running.
- c) Where the permissible or enhanced permissible speed is greater than 100 mph and continuous positions of safety or **refuges** are not provided on at least one side of the running lines.
- d) On bi-directional lines where continuous positions of safety are not provided on at least one side of the running lines.

9.5 Warning signs indicating that trains travel at speeds in excess of 125 mph

Warning signs shall be provided at access points to running lines with a permissible or enhanced permissible speed in excess of 125 mph, indicating that trains travel at speeds in excess of 125 mph.

Additional reminders shall be provided at regular intervals along **cess** walkways and continuous positions of safety. The infrastructure controller shall define the type of reminder to be used and the intervals at which they should be provided, taking into account:

- a) the visibility of the reminder.
- b) the durability and maintainability of the reminder, to give a reasonable expectation that the reminders will remain in place and be clearly visible at all times.
- c) the need to avoid the creation of tripping hazards.

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Only one type of reminder shall be defined, for use at all locations.

9.6 Provision of 'prohibition when trains are running at speeds above 125 mph' warning signs

In addition to the warning signs required by section 9.5, 'prohibition when trains are running at speeds above 125 mph' warning signs shall be provided where trains may run at permissible or enhanced permissible speeds greater than 125 mph and no **cess walkway** is provided.

They shall be orientated to face people walking along the running lines, at each end of the section of track where trains may run at permissible or enhanced permissible speed greater than 125 mph and any intermediate access points to the running lines, including the ends of platforms.

The warning signs shall be at eye height above **walkway** level wherever practicable.

9.7 Warning signs indicating trains travel in both directions

Warning signs shall be provided at access points to bi-directional lines where there is more than one running line, indicating that trains travel in both directions.

9.8 Warning signs at signal post telephones

Requirements for warning signs at signal post telephones with limited clearances to the adjacent running lines are given in [GK/RT0037](#).

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References

	Railway Group Standards
GA/RT6001	Railway Group Standards Change Procedures
GA/RT6004	Temporary Non-Compliance with Railway Group Standards
GA/RT6006	Derogations from Railway Group Standards
GC/RT5201	Lineside Security
GC/RT5202	Vegetation - Managing the Risk
GE/RT8025	Electrical Protective Provisions for Electrified Lines [Publication planned for June 2001]
GK/RT0033	Lineside Signs
GK/RT0037	Signal Sighting
GO/RT3000	Master Rule Book
GO/RT3204	Protection of Temporary Vehicular Level Crossings

The Catalogue of Railway Group Standards and the Railway Group Standards CD-ROM give the current issue number and status of documents published by Railway Safety.

Other References

HS(G)153/1	Railway Safety Principles and Guidance Part 1
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