



SCC Training
Briefing Notes
Module 1: Foundation



Introduction

The Safety Critical Communications training programme is modular. The full programme consists of **six** modules.

The modules may be taken in any order but we recommend that this **Foundation Module** is delivered first. For best results, please deliver the modules in order, though you may want to prioritise a given module if you are dealing with a particular issue:

- Foundation
- Protocols 1 (ABC-P, Phonetic Alphabet, Numbers, Time)
- Structure and Lead Responsibility
- Protocols 2 (Standard Words and Phrases, Emergency Call, Equipment)
- Confirming Understanding (Repeat Back, Questioning)
- Communication Skills (Assertiveness, Challenging, Considering Others)

Timing

The module will take at least 45 minutes to deliver. The timings are as follows:

- Core Content: 15min
- Discussions (5): 20min
- Test Questions: 10min
- Optional discussion: 4min
- Optional re-scripting exercise: 10

Discussions

Do not skip the discussions. They are essential to the learning process. Without them, the content will just be a stream of meaningless words. It is important that attendees work through the issues themselves as well as listening to the briefing material.

Try and ensure that everyone participates in the discussions. You may need to balance 'loud' individuals with those more reluctant to speak. Bear in mind that the quiet, thoughtful person at the back of the room may have a valuable contribution to make.

Your input is welcome. Your specific experience and knowledge are relevant to the discussion. You may wish to guide the discussion and make it relevant to your particular area of the industry, though please don't detract from the minimum standard set by this training course.

Notes for each discussion are provided below in the Content Notes. Don't 'wade in' with your answers too early. Let the group make their own suggestions and perhaps argue with each other.



National Minimum Standard

The standard is composed of **Key Learning Points** which are highlighted throughout the module and again, in the summary at the end. There is nothing difficult or complex about the standard. It simply seeks to set a minimum level, above which we should all be operating.

The **Key Learning Points** are:

Recognise when safety critical communication is happening

(remember all operational communication by front-line staff is safety critical)

Every time we hold an operational conversation, we are agreeing a contract

As professionals, we must all take responsibility for safety critical communications

We must take time to communicate well – no matter what the situation

(remember, safety takes priority over operational performance)

The Test

The test is not designed to catch anyone out. It simply makes sure that attendees have understood the material. The questions are all based on the National Minimum Standard. As the Briefer, you will be responsible for delivering the questions, which are provided below.

The questions should be directed to **individuals** within the group, making sure that **each person answers at least one question**. If someone fails a question, allow the other group members to help them, and then ask them another.

Delivering the Presentation

The PowerPoint presentation contains voice-over and example communication recordings. You will therefore need to make sure that you can **deliver audio to the room** at a suitable volume.

Most of the content is voice-over driven and the **slides will auto-forward**. However, we have paused the auto-forwarding in certain places to allow you to facilitate a discussion, play an example, or check that attendees are happy with the content.



Slides which require you to press forward (space bar, forward arrow or left-mouse click) are marked with this icon in the bottom right-hand corner.

VO

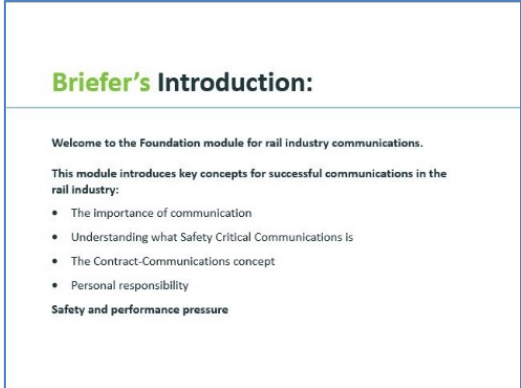


Slides containing voice-over. Note, the voice over is **sometimes delayed** to allow learners to digest the contents of a slide before listening to it. **Be patient!**

...VO pause before VO VO... pause after the VO VO...VO pause between VOs

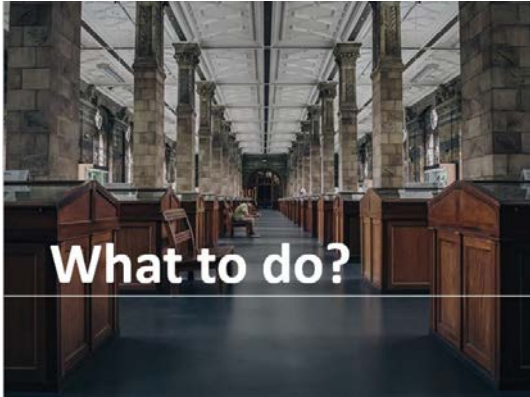


Content Notes

The following relate to specific content in the module. You may wish to have the module open.

Page Reference	Notes
 <p>Briefer's Introduction:</p> <p>Welcome to the Foundation module for rail industry communications.</p> <p>This module introduces key concepts for successful communications in the rail industry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The importance of communication• Understanding what Safety Critical Communications is• The Contract-Communications concept• Personal responsibility <p>Safety and performance pressure</p>	<p>The presentation has some notes at the beginning. These are for you, the Briefer, and not for attendees.</p>
 <p>Welcome</p>	<p>This Welcome page is designed to sit on the screen while you take care of 'housekeeping' details such as fire exit and introductions.</p>
 <p>Safety Critical Communications</p>	<p>This first section introduces SCC and makes the important point that we are all responsible for safety critical communications.</p>





This section makes the point that SCC involves more than simply using the phonetic alphabet. MUCH more.

It lays out our approach and introduces the National Minimum Standard.

Note, the Minimum Standard applies across the whole industry. It may be that certain jobs require further communication skills. What we're talking about here is a baseline, above which the entire industry must operate.



This section provides a definition of SCC:

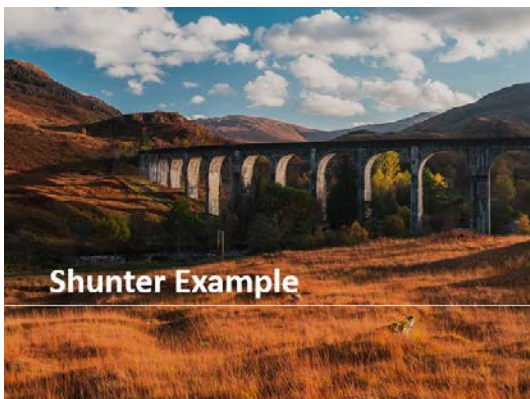
All operational communication by front-line staff is safety critical.

(We obviously don't expect train crew to use SCC protocols when discussing stock levels! Common sense must be applied. But, for the sake of a simplicity, we're using this definition.)



Run a SHORT discussion on what it is. Not how to do it (eg. phonetic alphabet) but when to do it - when is it required.

Do not skip this discussion.



The recording will play and the transcript will appear on the screen.

Q. A safety-critical communication?

No, it is not. **But it should be.** It strays from personal to operational, and important information is mangled.

The risk may appear low, but if it were compounded by a couple of further mistakes, then we could end up with an incident.





The Key Learning Point (National Minimum Standard):

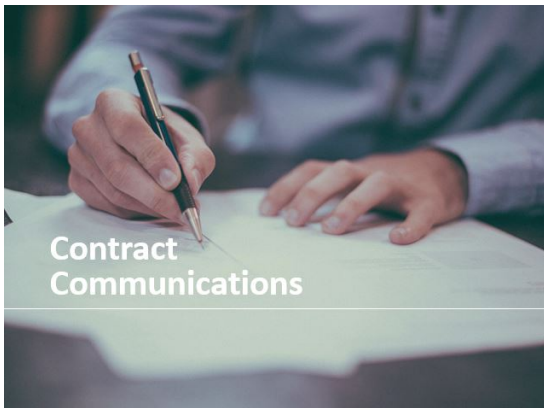
Recognise when safety critical communication is happening.

and remember:

All operational communication by front-line staff is safety critical.

Optional exercise: re-script the 'shunters' conversation to manage the change from casual to safety critical communication.

Note, the main point here is that the supervisor should recognise that the conversation is **switching to operational mode**, ie. it is changing into a safety critical communication.



In this section, we compare our communications to the process of agreeing a contract.



Why **might** the Signaller be so poor with his communication?



Did the driver **agree** 'the contract'?



What **should** the driver have done?

Discussion Notes:

Ask the attendees:



Have they experienced something similar in their jobs?

What situation do you think the Signaller was in?



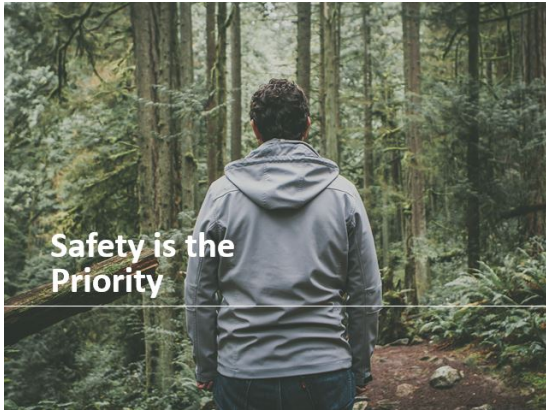
Why did the driver simply agree?

? The Signaller was probably under pressure, making lots of similar calls and was getting fed up of repeating himself.

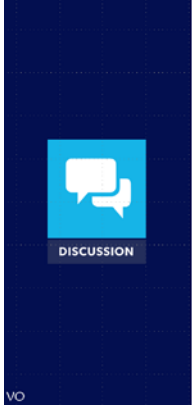



	<p>? Yes, the Driver agreed the contract. The information and instructions were terrible but by simply saying 'cheers' he was, in effect, agreeing to the communications contract. This is very dangerous. The actions were unclear, the contract was therefore poor, and both sides were making huge assumptions about what should happen.</p> <p>? The Driver should have challenged the Signaller. Although the Signaller had Lead Responsibility (a subject we'll deal with in a later module) <i>everyone</i> has a responsibility to ensure that the communication contract is well defined. The driver should have asked the Signaller to provide clear instructions and then repeated them back to ensure that a clear understanding was reached.</p>
	<p>The Key Learning Point (National Minimum Standard):</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Every time we hold an operational conversation, we are agreeing a verbal contract</p> <p>(even if the contract is unclear and dangerous!)</p>
	<p>In this section, we clear up a misunderstanding that all responsibility lies with the Signaller. It does not. The Signaller has Lead Responsibility, but we are all responsible for the quality of our communications.</p> <p>Discussion: Where does the responsibility lie?</p> <p>Some attendees might say that the Signaller has Lead Responsibility. Others might realise that we all have a responsibility. Let the discussion run a little.</p> <p>You do not need to provide an answer to this discussion – the following slides will look at Responsibility in detail.</p>



 <p>What should the Driver have done?</p> <p>What does he need to be careful of?</p>	<p>Challenging Poor Communications: this section revisits the recording of the Signaller providing poor instructions.</p> <p>Discussion Notes: The driver should have sought clarification. He could have realised that the Signaller was getting tired (empathy – a non technical skill – dealt with in a later module) and said something like:</p> <p>“Thanks Signaller. I know you’re fed up with these, but can you tell me exactly what you want me to do please.”</p> <p>This would avoid confrontation and give the Signaller the opportunity to get it right – to make the communication contract tighter.</p>
 <p>Responsibility</p>	<p>This section on Responsibility concludes with a The Key Learning Point (National Minimum Standard):</p> <p>As professionals, we must all take responsibility for safety critical communications.</p>
 <p>Safety is the Priority</p>	<p>This section looks at the issue of safety vs. operational performance.</p> <p>It states that:</p> <p>Safety takes priority over operational performance</p> <p>The section ends with the Key Learning Point:</p> <p>We must take time to communicate well – no matter what the situation</p>



 <p data-bbox="496 221 754 277"><i>"OK, me again. Granting you a blockage now, as we did last time. Need it back in twenty."</i></p> <p data-bbox="496 306 727 356">What should the above communication look like?</p> <p data-bbox="496 383 727 432">Why would standards slip like this?</p> <p data-bbox="496 459 743 533">Hint: this isn't the first time the Signaller has made this call.</p> <p data-bbox="762 562 788 591">✦</p>	<p data-bbox="831 228 1374 320">Depending on your audience, you might need to explain how this conversation can come about:</p> <p data-bbox="831 324 1382 515">Line blockages are granted by Signallers to enable maintenance teams to work on the track. During busy periods, the Signaller may be granting the same line blockage again and again to enable work to take place in between running trains.</p> <p data-bbox="831 577 1046 607">Discussion Notes:</p> <p data-bbox="831 642 1366 833">The communication is poor because the Signaller fails to identify himself correctly, or make sure he is talking to the correct person. Worst of all, he assumes that he is talking to the same person as 'last time' and that the details remain unchanged.</p> <p data-bbox="831 866 1382 992">The Signaller is probably tired of granting the same line blockage repeatedly. He's starting to take short cuts – trying to speed up the process.</p> <p data-bbox="831 1025 1331 1151">The conversation should be structured correctly. It should follow the protocols. It should be a tight contract, not an informal statement.</p> <p data-bbox="831 1184 1366 1310">Don't worry about going through the protocols in detail (you can if you really want to!). We'll be looking at them in the next module.</p>
 <p data-bbox="300 1637 539 1675">Module Review</p>	<p data-bbox="831 1408 1382 1503">This section provides an opportunity to review the module. There is some introductory text and then a list of the four Key Learning Points.</p> <p data-bbox="831 1536 1350 1599">For the list, you need to hit the space bar to reveal each point.</p> <p data-bbox="831 1632 1358 1758">You could run this as a question-and-answer session, asking the attendees to provide the Key Learning Points. You may need to give hints.</p>





This section concludes this module and looks forward to the remaining modules.

On the last slide, there's a note to remind you to conduct a short test. For this Foundation module, there are only a few questions. In subsequent modules the questions will become more detailed.



Test Questions

This module has presented a Foundation course for Safety Critical Communications. The National Minimum Standard requires that attendees *understand* the following Key Learning Points:

Recognise when safety critical communication is happening

(remember, all operational communication by front-line staff is safety critical)

Every time we hold an operational conversation, we are agreeing a contract

As professionals, we must all take responsibility for safety critical communications

We must take time to communicate well – no matter what the situation

(remember, safety takes priority over operational performance)

Because this is a foundation course, the questions are based around *understanding* concepts. In later modules, the questions will test both *understanding* and *execution*, ie. attendees must be able to 'do it.'

You will need to use your own judgement for some of the answers.

Ask questions of *individuals* and make sure that everyone in the group answers at least one question.

1. **Q. What is safety critical communications? Provide examples from your own work area.**
 - A. All operational communication is safety critical

2. **Q. Why is it important to recognise when safety critical communication is happening?**
 - A. So that we can make sure we do it properly, using the correct protocols

3. **Q. Provide an example of a situation where you may fail to recognise that the communication is safety critical. Remember the 'Shunters arriving at work' example in the course (could be asked of several attendees).**
 - A. This is specific to your area of the rail industry. Most casual conversations have the potential to stray into operations-related subjects and therefore becomes safety critical.



4. **Q. In what way are taking out a car loan or renting a flat, like safety critical communications? Provide details – what aspects are similar?**
- A. Every time we hold an operational conversation, we are agreeing a contract. For example, we detail who we are, who the other party is, what we are agreeing to do, what they are agreeing to do, when it will start, when it will stop - and we sign to confirm our agreement.
5. **Q. All responsibility for safety critical communication lies with the Signaller. True or False?**
- A. False. The Signaller may have Lead Responsibility, but we are all responsible for SCC.
6. **Q. What sort of things should we NOT put in a safety critical conversation? (hint, they are irrelevant and distracting and therefore dangerous).**
- A. Personal conversations, moaning, irrelevant information, gossip, etc.
7. **Q. We should challenge poor safety critical communication. True or False? (follow up: what should we keep in mind when doing it?)**
- A. True, but we need to empathise with the person – Understanding Other’s Needs is an important Communication Skill. We’ll deal with Communication Skills in module 6.
8. **Q. Safety Critical Communications must be balanced with Operational Performance. It is acceptable to relax some communication protocols in order to deliver optimum performance. True or False?**
- A. False.
9. **Q. Given that we are all human, we must accept that a repetitive job will lead to slightly lower quality communications. True or False.**
- A. False. We must deliver high quality communications consistently.
10. **Q. Ask individuals to state one of the Key Learning Points (make sure different people answer. You may need to prompt them a little; it’s acceptable for attendees to use their own words if they have understood the point; you should clarify by reading the official version)**
- A. The Key Learning Points are listed at the top of this Test.

