

# Track Worker Safety: Managers and Approvers



everyone  
home safe  
every day

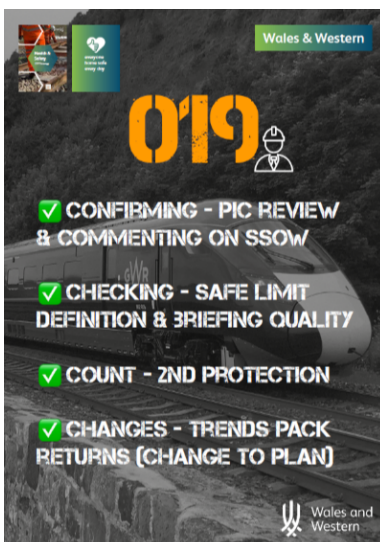
Dear all,

In this week's message, I wanted to speak again about Track Worker Safety. Our track worker standard is described in the document [NR/L2/OHS/019](#). Although 20+ pages long, it tries to achieve 4 outcomes, each of those being pretty straightforward and without the need for explanation. It captures these points particularly, as these are areas where in previous times, accidents have happened because of issues in these areas.



**Rob Cairns,**  
Regional Managing Director

1. Local planning, (parties involved in the work)
2. Identified Lead (Person In Charge)
3. Use of independent checks & approvals
4. An individual plan that has the (real) risks assessed



I actually think it's possible to reduce this even further, which is to say that what we really want is for the managers who approve and authorise the safe work packs to really think carefully about these points before awarding their permission, and agreement to the work arrangements that shall be in play, when the works take place.

A key pick up in a number of recent and past incidents is that the actual person in charge of the works, may not be sufficiently involved during the early stages of planning the works. We therefore want approving managers to consider and check on this as part of their approval.

Moreover, the clearness of how the safe work limits are described in the paperwork, and the use of secondary protection may not be sufficiently involved during the early stages of planning work, we therefore want approving managers to consider and check on this as part of their approval.

Therefore I really want managers, and those approving the safe work packs to confirm that the person actually doing the work was involved in planning it, checking that the safety rules in the paperwork are clear. Approvers need to check these things before they approve the work, and also feel comfortable in withholding their approval if they haven't satisfied themselves it's safe. To ensure work safety, managers approving plans must rigorously check they involve workers from the start, clarify safety rules, and ensure backup measures exist. This thorough approval builds a stronger, safer organisation.

When you approve a safety plan, you're saying you've checked it's safe. That means you're responsible for what's been agreed to. You can't just sign off without looking at it carefully. You need to make sure everything's been thought about, and that people doing the job know what to do. If you don't check, and something bad happens, it's on you. So, checking isn't just a task, it's about making sure everyone stays safe because you're the one who said it was okay.

Just to summarise then, managers and approvers must really think about the following things before clicking on the approve button.

1. Confirm the PIC (Person in Charge) has commented on the SSOW pack
2. Checking that the safe limit definition has been clearly set out in the SSOW pack
3. Counting the secondary protection usage
4. That arrangements are verified between the planning stage and the commencement of work

Finally, I wanted to briefly summarise last week's message, which discussed how people can sometimes ignore dangers because they want to avoid feeling bad or being left out. This is called "truth blindness".

- **Influence, not force:** We can't control everything, but we can encourage safe behaviour.
- **Value everyone's opinion:** Different viewpoints help us see potential problems.
- **Be aware of our own biases:** We all have them, and they can cloud our judgment.
- **Lead by example:** Be humble, listen, and be open to feedback.
- **Make people feel safe to speak up:** They should be able to share concerns without fear.

Basically, we need to create a workplace where people are honest, listen to each other, and care more about safety than being comfortable.

As always, please feel free to [reply directly](#) to me; your thoughts and experiences on this topic really matter to me.

Stay safe,  
Rob