

Safety Advice



PICOP working location

Scope: All Network Rail Line Managers, safety professionals and accredited contractors

Ref: NRA25-03

Date: 07/04/2025

Location: National

Contact: [Simon Wilkinson, Head of Infrastructure access, System Operator](#)



Overview

Recently there have been some examples where PICOPs (Person in Charge of Possession) are undertaking their duties from unsuitable locations, such as working from home. This is not acceptable normal practice as highlighted in Recommendation three from the Balham RAIB (Rail Accident Investigation Board) investigation [Report](#).

PICOPs shall work from the most appropriate location and have access to the tools, resources and equipment required to perform their duties. This would normally be a Possession Control Centre, appropriate Network Rail / Contractor office, on-site or a Route Signalling Centre.

It is important that PICOPs are actively engaged with this important safety activity: -

- Maintaining overall control of the possession.
- Able and capable to manage incidents.
- Can collaborate with the right staff to provide leadership.
- Make sure critical site documentation for possession limits, worksite limits, isolation, and other permit to work documents are created and assured.

Action Required

System Operator is currently updating the group standard NR/L2/OPS/303 standard. In recognition that it will require some time to match the expectation set out above the following action should be undertaken by the **3rd June 2025**: -

- A PICOP should undertake their duties in a suitable work location such as Possession Control Centre, appropriate Network Rail / Contractor office, on-site or a Route Signalling Centre
- A professional work location is preferred but it is recognised that a **vehicle** may be used by a PICOP to undertake their duties. If working in a vehicle then complexity of the work/documentation should be considered and the creation and assurance of critical site documentation for possession limits, worksite limits, isolation, permit to work documents and the health of the PICOP should not be adversely affected by working in the constrained space.
- While the preference should always be to use a professional work location there may be some exceptional circumstances where **working from home** is acceptable provided a suitable and sufficient risk assessment is undertaken. Considerations when undertaking the risk assessment should include factors such as; Mobile device signal strength, back up mobile device or landline, distance from the possession in case they are required at the possession, accessibility, overcrowding in control rooms, weather, travel conditions, shift duration, driving time, home location suitability, including potential distractions, and DSE issues.