



SMTH Sentinel Transition Frequently Asked Questions

This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document is a summary of information requested and delivered during the SMTH Sentinel transition briefing sessions held with industry in February 2026. It is intended as a public reference document to raise awareness of available information and does not introduce new policy or requirements.

Last updated: **3rd March 2026**

Scope of SMTH Sentinel Transition.

Which SMTH competencies are affected by the transition to Sentinel?

The following SMTH Authority to Work (ATW) competencies will transition to management within Sentinel from **10 March 2026**:

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| • SIG MAINT TEST SMTH.a | Core Skills |
| • SIG MAINT TEST SMTH.b | Aspect Testing |
| • SIG MAINT TEST SMTH.c | Points Testing |
| • SIG MAINT TEST SMTH.d | Cable Function Testing |
| • SIG MAINT TEST SMTH.f | Diversion of a Circuit |

Which SMTH competencies are not affected?

SMTH competencies not listed above, and any other competence frameworks or schemes outside SMTH, are not affected and will continue to be managed through existing arrangements.

General Information.

What is the purpose of the SMTH briefing sessions?

The briefing sessions confirmed and explained the transition of SMTH competencies into Sentinel, following Noticeboard NB239, and supersede previous briefings.

When does SMTH transition into Sentinel take effect?

From **Tuesday 10 March 2026** the Sentinel system must be used as the ATW system for the in-scope SMTH competencies.

Renewal and Annual review.

How often should SMTH competence be reviewed?

SMTH competencies should be reviewed annually to confirm continued need and competence. Within Network Rail this is achieved through the Annual Competence Conversation (ACC), externally you should follow your organisation's own process.

When can an individual renew an SMTH competence?

An individual may renew at any time up to the expiry date. For non-Network Rail staff, a two-month grace period applies after expiry; Network Rail staff should follow the requirements of NR/L3/CTM/306.

Action Learning and Not Yet Competent status.

When does the 12-month action learning period start?

The 12-month period begins from the date the level 2 (Signal Maintenance Tester in Action Learning) outcome is awarded.

What supervision is required during Action Learning?

Testers in 'action learning' must be accompanied on-site by a 'competent and experienced SMTH holder. The competent and experienced tester is accountable for the testing undertaken.

Sentinel as the authority to work (ATW)

What changes from 10 March 2026?

Sentinel becomes the system used to record and check the SMTH Authority to Work. Sentinel cards must be scanned prior to site access and Sentinel scheme rules will apply to in-scope competencies.

Data Governance and support.

How do I request a data change before 10 March 2026?

Please email signallingcompetencyframework@networkrail.co.uk with the individual's name, Sentinel number, competence details, and evidence to support the change.

Who should I contact for support?

Sentinel user support: [Sentinel](#)

Sentinel system issues: sentinel@mitie.com or 0330 726 2222.

Policy and framework queries: signallingcompetencyframework@networkrail.co.uk.

Further information and briefing materials are available via Safety Central. [SMTH Industry Competence Management Standardisation - Safety Central](#)



To access information on the SMTH safety central page please scan the QR code.