

Dear Sponsor,

Network Rail's safety assurance and investigations into several serious incidents have each highlighted a range of areas of weak compliance with the Sentinel Scheme Rules. The Sentinel Scheme Rules are there for everyone's safety; non-compliance puts workers and others at risk. The rules are part of the Network Rail's control framework and compliance by all sponsors is a condition of working on Network Rail's managed infrastructure. Sentinel card holders also carry obligations in the Sentinel Scheme Rules for their own actions and behaviour.

One of the principles in the Sentinel Scheme Rules is that each sponsor has the same obligations as an employer in health and safety law for every worker that they primary sponsor. Those obligations apply regardless of the basis of payment the worker receives – whether 'on the books' and paying tax through PAYE or engaged through any form of self-employment for tax purposes, including payment through 'umbrella' companies.

Where the primary sponsor is also accountable for compliance with other parts of Network Rail's control framework, such as planning and implementing safe systems of work on track, there are examples of shortcuts and compromises which fail to achieve compliance. It is therefore timely for all sponsors to take stock of compliance more generally.

The Sentinel Board has endorsed more rigour to promote and enforce compliance with the Sentinel Scheme Rules including, where necessary, removing the right of sponsors to provide staff to work on Network Rail's managed infrastructure. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to remind all sponsors of the following:

- Primary sponsors must provide all necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) at no cost to the sponsored individual.
- Primary sponsors must provide, at no cost to the individual, all the equipment a worker needs to undertake their task – including test, possession/worksite and earthing equipment.
- Primary sponsors must pay for personal track safety (PTS) training and recertification, and for any other competence required by the sponsor.
- Primary sponsors are responsible for identifying, implementing and paying for any health surveillance requirements.
- All PTS holders must be able to communicate effectively in English, so that they can fully understand safety briefings and emergency procedures and respond accordingly.
- Safe work packs must be verified by the Person in Charge before they are approved by the responsible manager.
- Using a mobile phone (even hands free) while driving is a breach of the Lifesaving Rules.

Finally, in taking action to make sure you do fully understand and meet the requirements of the Sentinel Scheme Rules, I should inform you that there have been recent minor changes regarding sponsor qualification assurance for those sponsors who do not, and do not intend to, contract directly with Network Rail. The current version of the rules can be found at <http://info.railsentinel.co.uk/help-support/sponsors/sentinel-scheme-rules/>.

While this letter is being sent to sponsors' Sentinel coordinators, it should please be shared with Managing Directors and other senior staff in your organisation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Allan Spence". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Allan Spence
Sentinel Senior Responsible Owner
Network Rail