

Investigators' Handbook

Part 2 – The investigation

Part 2B



This Part 2B includes the following sections:

- During the investigation
- Interviewing witnesses
- Once the investigation is completed

Part 2 – The investigation

Part 2B

Contents

During the investigation	3
Interviewing witnesses	23
Once the investigation is completed	41

This page intentionally left blank

During the investigation

Contents

Management of the investigation team and observers	4
Aims and objectives of the investigation	7
Who takes the lead?	8
Interviewing witnesses	8
Progress of the investigation	9
Concluding the investigation	11
New evidence	12
Disputes/conflict of interest	13
Timescale extensions	16
Drafting the investigation report	17
Agreeing the investigation report	20

The investigation cannot be regarded as finished until the investigation report has been agreed by the investigation team and accepted by the DCP.

This section of the handbook therefore deals with both the investigation team meeting and the preparation (i.e. drafting) of the investigation report.

Management of the investigation team and observers

The lead investigator must manage the investigation to make sure its aims and objectives – as shown in the remit – are met.

This includes:

Issue/topic	Guidance
Briefing the investigation team members/ observers on the purpose of the investigation	<p>This should be carried out before starting and should include, where appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the aims and objectives of the investigation;• the need to co-operate to achieve the requirements of the remit;• the need for investigation team members to accept being signatories to the conclusion(s);• the rights and obligations of the investigation team members, observers and witnesses;• what happens if a witness refuses to give verbal evidence to the investigation;• the process for resolving disagreements/disputes.

Issue/topic	Guidance
Briefing the investigation team members/observers on the conduct of the investigation	<p>This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who takes the lead, particularly with regard to witness interviews; • when investigation team members may ask questions and how this should be done; • whether observers will be permitted to ask questions and how this should be done. <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: yellow; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>At the discretion of the lead investigator, observers may be permitted to express a view, put questions to witnesses and participate in the discussion stage prior to conclusions being reached and the formulation of recommendations and/or local actions.</p> </div>
<p>Leading the investigation to achieve the requirements of the remit</p> <p>Managing the order of proceedings to allow sufficient time for the review and discussion of the evidence</p>	<p>The lead investigator will need to make sure both the 'General Objectives' and the 'Specific Objectives' of the investigation remit are met – and that this is achieved within the timescales shown in the remit.</p>
Summarising and analysing important issues, where appropriate, for the benefit of those present	<p>This may prove beneficial where the accident/incident is of a complex nature.</p>
Identifying any urgent safety related issues that need to be addressed	<p>The DCP must be advised of any urgent safety related matters as soon as they are discovered – DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE REPORT IS READY TO BE REVIEWED. The DCP will then decide whether to inform others as required by GE/RT8250 and/or NR/L2/OPS/035.</p>

Issue/topic	Guidance
Leading the investigation team in establishing the immediate and underlying causes of the event	This should also include identifying any other safety related issues, i.e. issues that are not causal factors in the event but which need to be addressed.
Resolving disputes and any conflicts of interest during the investigation	The DCP should be advised of any disputes/conflicts of interest that arise and which may not be resolved. These are not common, but they can occur, even though the investigation team members understand the purpose of the investigation and their role in it, and have been briefed at the commencement of the investigation.
Identifying the need for, and requesting the provision of, additional evidence and information necessary to complete the investigation	It is possible that, during the course of the investigation, e.g. during witness interviews, a new issue(s) will be identified for which further evidence will need to be obtained to confirm or corroborate what has been said or provided.
Informing the DCP of progress with the investigation	In addition to advising the DCP of any urgent safety related issues or disputes/conflicts of interest, the DCP should be informed whether the investigation report will be completed within the remit's timescales. If necessary, the DCP should be advised of the need for timescale extensions for completing the investigation report.

Further guidance on some of the above is provided in the following sub-sections.

Aims and objectives of the investigation

The principal purposes of the investigation are to:

- a) establish the facts of the event and immediate and underlying causes;
- b) propose remedial actions to prevent a recurrence or to eliminate or minimise the risk from such events.

The investigation must not be used as a means for allocating blame or liability.

In the investigation remit, the 'General Objectives' and 'Specific Objectives' will identify areas that will need to be considered and addressed by the investigation.

Co-operation

By attending the investigation, the investigation team members should have accepted that they have a duty to co-operate in the investigation.

Where necessary, particularly where any doubt arises, the lead investigator may wish to remind the investigation team members of their obligations to co-operate with the investigation. For example:

- a) Regulation 22 of the Railways and Other Guided Transport Systems (Safety) Regulations 2006 places a duty of co-operation on transport operators and their contractors.
- b) Section 4.5 of Network Rail's HSMS describes the company's arrangements for co-operation and similar arrangements should exist within the safety management systems of other transport operators.

Who takes the lead?

Normally, the lead investigator should take the lead in:

- a) setting the scene;
- b) interviewing witnesses;
- c) reviewing the evidence and identifying issues that require discussion or further clarification;
- d) resolving disputes and any conflicts of interest during the investigation;
- e) leading the investigation team in establishing the immediate and underlying causes of the event and any other safety issues identified as well as formulating recommendations and/or local actions;
- f) identifying the need for, and requesting the provision of, additional evidence and information necessary to complete the formal investigation.

However, in the case of (b) and (c) and where the evidence provided may be of a specialist or technical nature, it may be appropriate for a member of the investigation team with the appropriate skills/knowledge to take the lead.

The lead investigator should make sure that:

- a) where witnesses are interviewed, they are not bombarded with questions from the investigation team – each investigation team member should be given an opportunity to ask questions and each should wait their turn;
- b) where evidence is discussed, such discussion is structured to enable the relevant issues to be identified and agreed.

Interviewing witnesses

See the [Interviewing witnesses](#) section in this Part 2B of the handbook for details.

Progress of the investigation

The lead investigator must inform the DCP of progress with the investigation, including:

- a) details of any urgent safety matters identified during the investigation;
- b) if the investigation team may not be able to reach an agreed conclusion (see the [Disputes/conflict of interest](#) sub-section below);
- c) the need for timescale extensions for producing the investigation report (see the [Timescale extensions](#) sub-section below).

The DCP will also monitor progress of the investigation in order to be satisfied whether:

- a) the investigation remit's objectives are being met;
- b) the investigation process is being properly conducted;
- c) the lead investigator needs assistance to overcome any problems encountered.

Urgent safety related matters

The lead investigator must advise the DCP immediately of any urgent safety related matters discovered during the investigation.

An urgent safety related matter includes:

'High risk defect'	A defect that has caused, or could have had a high likelihood of causing: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) death, ill-health or major injury to persons;b) derailment or collision of trains.
'High risk operating incident or irregularity'	An unplanned, uncontrolled high risk event during train operations (including an irregular working practice) which has or could have had a high likelihood of causing: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) death, ill-health or major injury to persons;b) derailment or collision of trains.

This will enable the DCP to consider whether to advise others of the urgent safety matters as required:

- a) by Railway Group standard GE/RT8250;
- b) by Network Rail standard [NR/L2/OPS/035](#);
- c) through Infrastructure Group Safety Bulletins (issued by Network Rail).

Details of any urgent safety related matter identified during the investigation will need to be included in the investigation report.

Local actions

Details of any local actions identified and addressed before the investigation report is completed will need to be included in the 'Action already taken' sub-section of the 'Factors discussed' section of the investigation report.

If the investigation identifies any local action that may need to be taken to address a failure to comply (i.e. non-compliance or non-conformance) with an existing – and adequate – process, rule, instruction or standard, the lead investigator should arrange for details to be provided to the relevant manager or organisation and request that appropriate action is taken to address the matter.

Concluding the investigation

Once all the evidence has been reviewed and, where appropriate, witnesses have been interviewed, the lead investigator should lead the investigation team in:

- establishing the immediate and underlying causes;
- identifying any other safety issues (i.e. issues that are not considered 'causal' but which, nonetheless, need to be addressed);
- formulating recommendations and/or local actions to address the causes and any 'other safety related issues' that have been identified.

See the 'Identifying the causes' section in Part 4 of the handbook for guidance on the identification of the causes of an event.

Ideally, these should be agreed during the investigation team meeting and will need to be included in the draft investigation report.

However, very often, additional causes and/or 'other safety related issues' will be identified and need to be considered. For example:

The lead investigator's drafting of the investigation report may reveal causes and/or 'other safety related issues' that the investigation team had not considered or had overlooked during its review of the evidence.

This is further discussed in the [Drafting the investigation report](#) sub-section below.

Further information may need to be obtained and/or new evidence collected following witness interviews or the investigation team's discussions.

This is further discussed in the [New evidence](#) sub-section below.

New evidence

Where the investigation team identifies the need for further or new information or evidence to be obtained, or special tests or technical investigation to be undertaken, the investigation team should delay establishing the cause(s) of the event until such further evidence or the test results are available, unless the investigation team is satisfied that they will not affect the conclusions.

Where the investigation identifies the need for new or additional evidence before the investigation can be concluded, the lead investigator will need to:

Arrange for the new/additional evidence to be obtained.	Where this needs to be provided by one of the participating organisations, the relevant investigation team member must be asked to obtain and provide it as quickly as possible.
Where appropriate, arrange for the investigation to be reconvened.	Depending on its nature and relevance, and with the investigation team's agreement, it may be possible to review the new/additional evidence 'in correspondence' rather than arranging for the investigation team to reconvene.

Such new information and/or evidence should be collected and reviewed by the lead investigator.

The new information/evidence may reveal other causes and 'other safety related issues' that the lead investigator should discuss and include within the draft investigation report.

Where it is necessary to reconvene the investigation team, the lead investigator should inform the DCP of the reasons and, where appropriate, seek an extension to the remit timescales.

Disputes/conflict of interest

The principal aim of the investigation is to provide an understanding of the causes of the event and the actions needed to prevent recurrence.

It therefore follows that the principal objective of the investigation team is to produce a single investigation report with which all members of the team agree.

Occasionally, for various reasons, one or more parties may refuse to co-operate with the investigation or sign the report.

A dispute or conflict may arise because of:

- a) a misunderstanding of what was intended or required;
- b) a different point of view;
- c) different interests;
- d) different values;
- e) other factors.

Understanding which of the above are present may assist in resolving the dispute/conflict.

Preventing disputes or conflicts

The following offers some advice/guidance on preventing disputes or conflicts from arising:

- a) set out the objectives and ground rules at the beginning of the investigation;
- b) encourage participation and open discussion;
- c) try to be aware of potential problem issues at an early stage;
- d) keep an open mind and try to avoid preconceptions and potential 'traps', i.e. something in your own thinking that prevents you from seeing a possible solution or course of action;
- e) make an effort to understand the perspectives and worldviews of the individual(s) and organisation(s) involved.

Declining to co-operate and/or provide evidence

Where an investigation team member is unwilling or declines a request to provide evidence or is unwilling to co-operate further with the investigation, the lead investigator should remind the person concerned of their organisation's obligations to co-operate with the investigation.

For example:

- a) Employees have a contractual duty to co-operate in the carrying out of their employer's business.
- b) Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 imposes a duty on employees to co-operate with their employer to carry out their duties under the Act.
- c) Regulation 22 of the Railways and Other Guided Transport Systems (Safety) Regulations 2006 places a duty of co-operation on transport operators and their contractors.
- d) Section 4.5 of Network Rail's HSMS describes the company's arrangements for co-operation and similar arrangements should exist within the safety management systems of other transport operators.

If the lead investigator is unable to resolve the dispute, the investigation team members and their organisation should be advised that the investigation will continue; the nature of the dispute will be recorded in the investigation report and conclusions reached.

If the lead investigator is unable to resolve the dispute or disagreement the DCP must be informed, together with the reasons, and asked to assist in achieving a unanimous agreement.

If necessary the DCP shall seek assistance from the Head of Corporate Assurance & Accident Investigation (HoCAAI). In the case of a serious accident or other high profile event, then the DCP or senior management should be asked to make an approach to the organisation, to encourage them to provide the evidence requested or to co-operate with the investigation.

Reaching agreement on causes, etc.

The investigation team may not reach unanimous agreement on:

- a) the immediate and underlying causes;
- b) any 'other safety related issues', where appropriate;
- c) the associated recommendations and/or local actions;
- d) the response to any comment or request for change received following any consultation period.

The inability of the investigation team to reach a unanimous agreement may be due to a genuine difference of opinion and/or interpretation, rather than an unwillingness to agree.

In such circumstances, the lead investigator will need to establish the reasons and attempt to resolve any dispute or disagreement before the investigation can be concluded.

If the lead investigator is unable to resolve the dispute or disagreement the DCP will need to be informed, together with the reasons, and asked to assist in achieving a unanimous agreement.

If necessary the DCP should seek assistance from the HoCAAI.

Majority report

This should be a last resort but if, despite all efforts to resolve a dispute, agreement cannot be achieved it is permissible to publish a 'majority' report, i.e. one with which the majority of the investigation members agree.

In such cases, the lead investigator should record in the 'Signatures' section of the report:

- a) that the report is a 'majority' report;
- b) the reasons for the 'majority' report being issued.

Timescale extensions

The lead investigator must advise the DCP if he/she is unable to produce the draft or completed investigation report within the timescales set in the remit and request an extension to the timescales.

The lead investigator should not wait until the remit timescales 'expire' before informing the DCP.

The DCP should also be informed of:

- a) the reason the original timescales will not be met;
- b) the length of the extension required.

Below are examples of when an extension should be sought:

- a) the investigation is unable to commence owing to the absence of key witnesses (e.g. through sickness, injury or leave);
- b) the investigation team needs to reconvene to interview further witnesses or to consider new evidence;
- c) the investigation team is awaiting critical evidence or information or the results of tests before it can reach a satisfactory conclusion.

The DCP will advise whether the timescale extension is granted.

Granted	The DCP will re-issue the remit with revised timescales.
Declined	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The DCP will advise the reasons.• The report should be completed as soon as possible.

Drafting the investigation report

The lead investigator should draft the investigation in accordance with Part 3 of the handbook.

This provides guidance on how to use the report templates and what needs to be included at each section of the report.

The drafting of the investigation report may involve a number of stages – or iterations – depending on:

- a) the complexity of the event being investigated;
- b) the availability of all the evidence and information needed to complete the drafting of the investigation report;
- c) the need for the investigation team to reconvene to obtain and consider new evidence;
- d) the size of the investigation team;
- e) the need for the draft report to undergo a period of consultation.

As a result, it may be necessary to provide a draft of the investigation report at different stages before the investigation report can be completed and passed to the DCP. For example:

Complexity of the event	Several drafts may need to be prepared and agreed by the investigation members to be sure the report is accurate and reflects the investigation team's views.
Availability of evidence/information	<p>An initial draft of the report may be prepared and circulated to investigation team members subject to it being redrafted when the evidence/information becomes available.</p> <p>It may be necessary for investigation team members to 'fill in' any gaps in the draft report, owing to the 'ownership' or specialist nature of the evidence/information.</p>

Reconvening the investigation team	If the investigation team needs to reconvene to obtain and consider any new evidence/information, it may be desirable to prepare an initial draft of the investigation report that can be discussed and amended as necessary to reflect the new evidence/information.
The size of the investigation team	The larger the investigation team the greater the likelihood that it will be necessary to provide several draft versions in order to reach agreement over particular issues.
10-working day consultation period	<p>If the report undergoes a period of consultation, it is likely there will be a need to amend the 'consultation' draft report to reflect the feedback received – as a result, a revised draft report (or reports!) may need to be prepared before agreement on the report can be reached.</p> <div><p>All formal investigation reports are required to undergo consultation. The DCP will decide whether a local investigation report needs to undergo consultation.</p></div>

As shown in Part 3 of this handbook, each draft of the investigation report will need to be a separate document, i.e. Draft A, Draft B, Draft C, etc. in order to apply effective document control and to enable the effective tracking and management of any necessary changes in the drafting of the investigation report.

It is not necessary for investigation team members to sign the 'Signature' page of the draft investigation report.

Such signature (or agreement) is only needed for the completed report.

Checking the draft report

A check should be made of the draft report to make sure that:

- a) the general and specific objectives of the remit have been met;
- b) the immediate and underlying causes – and any 'other safety related issues' – have been correctly identified;
- c) the recommendations and local actions are appropriate and have been addressed to the correct organisation;
- d) the report has a cohesive structure;
- e) spelling and grammar is correct;
- f) abbreviations and terms have been consistently used;
- g) the format of the report complies with the Network Rail template and style.
- h) the names of individuals involved in the event have not been included in the report.

The DCP will undertake a check of these – and other issues.

An Investigation Report checklist is available from the Investigators Handbook page of [Connect](#) to assist both DCPs and lead investigators when reviewing reports.

Investigation team review of draft report

When the lead investigator sends the draft investigation report to the investigation team members they should be requested to:

- a) comment on the content of the report, identifying any corrections that need to be made, e.g. typographical and grammatical errors, factual errors, etc.;
- b) advise of any changes that need to be made to the report's contents, e.g. additional text or text to be deleted;
- c) confirm agreement, or otherwise, to the content of the report, including the causes, 'other safety related issues' (where appropriate) and any recommendations and local actions.

How to send the draft report?

The lead investigator should consider how best to send the draft investigation report to the investigation team. E-mailing the draft investigation report is the preferred option as this virtually guarantees delivery (provided the e-mail address is correct!) and is quick to arrange.

Whether to send a Microsoft Word or a PDF (i.e. Adobe Acrobat) version of the report will depend on the experience and knowledge of IT (e.g. converting the Word document to a PDF version requires the necessary software and knowledge to do this).

Sending the draft report as a Word document will enable investigation team members to mend the draft report but, unless the changes are marked in some way (**Note** that Microsoft Word includes a 'Track Changes' option that can be used) management of the necessary changes may become a problem. It may be preferable to ask investigation team members to separately identify the changes that need to be made; this can be done in an e-mail or a form can be used for them to record the proposed changes.

The status of the report (see Part 3 of this handbook for guidance) will need to reflect when the draft is amended in response to any changes requested.

Agreeing the investigation report

Once the drafting of the investigation report has been completed, including where the draft report has undergone a 10-day consultation period, the lead investigator will need to obtain the acceptance of each investigation team member to the completed report.

Once the investigation team members have agreed the latest draft of the investigation report, and no more comments are anticipated, the lead investigator will then need to:

- a) 'save' the document as 'Issue 1' (this should be indicated in the status box in the footer of the document);
- b) send the completed report (preferably by e-mail) to the investigation team members and ask them to sign/agree the report.

Under no circumstances use 'Final' in the document name or the footer.

Signing/agreeing the completed report

For local investigations it is normal for the report to be completed after the DCP has reviewed the draft report.

For formal investigations – and any local investigation report that has been sent for 10-day consultation – it is normal for the report to be completed after consultation has been completed and the DCP has reviewed the revised draft report.

It is not necessary for investigation team members to sign the 'Signature' page of the draft investigation report.

Such signature (or agreement) is only needed for the completed report.

Investigation team members should be asked to sign/agree the completed report as follows:

- a) sign and date (in the appropriate boxes) the 'Signature' page of the investigation report and return it by post to the lead investigator; or
- b) sign and date (in the appropriate boxes) the 'Signature' page of the investigation report and fax it to the lead investigator; or
- c) provide an e-mail to the lead investigator indicating agreement with the content of the investigation report.

Observers should not sign/agree the investigation report.

It is not necessary for the investigation team members' signatures to be reproduced in the investigation report but the 'Signature' pages received need to be retained with the investigation file.

In the absence of a signature, or agreement has been received by e-mail, the 'Signatures' page should contain, for example, the following words:

"Signature held on investigation file."

or

"Agreement by e-mail held on investigation file."

The 'Date' box on the 'Signature' page should record the date the signature was recorded or the date the e-mail was received by the lead investigator.

Some organisations, including our own RRP's and NRRP, will not accept a report as complete unless it contains some indication of signature/agreement and the date this was obtained.

Once the investigation team members have indicated their acceptance of the completed investigation report, the lead investigator will need to:

- a) sign the 'Signature' page of the investigation report;
- b) provide the DCP with the 'signed', completed investigation report.

Interviewing witnesses

Contents

Data protection.....	24
Factors influencing interviews.....	24
Memory recall	25
Investigative interviewing approach.....	26
Who takes the lead?	35
Recording the witness interview	36
If a witness refuses to give evidence	38
Managing witnesses	39

The [Witness Information Pack](#) on *Connect* provides guidance to employees – and their line managers – who may be required to attend a Rail Industry Investigation.

Interviewing people will often provide the main source of information in understanding what happened – and why. In some cases, it will be almost impossible to clearly understand what happened without interviewing those involved.

This section provides guidance on how:

- using effective interviewing techniques can improve the amount of information that can be recalled following an accident or incident.
- the investigation process can benefit from a more structured approach to collecting information through interviews.

Data protection

In the case of any evidence that contains personal data/information (such as the name, address or date of birth) of any individual involved it must be kept secure in accordance with Network Rail's [Data Protection Policy](#).

Factors influencing interviews

There are a number of factors that influence the accuracy of the evidence provided by those involved in an event and those who witnessed it:

- We have a number of limitations in how we remember and recall information which means reports are typically incomplete, partially constructed and unreliable;
- The interviewer can influence people through the questions asked, the way they are asked and the way in which a picture is built up of what happened.
- The fear of the consequences for the individual(s) involved of providing an accurate account, such as losing their job or loss of respect from colleagues.

The investigative interviewing approach outlined later in this section is specifically designed to minimise these factors and to obtain accurate and comprehensive accounts of what happened and why from witnesses and other key parties in an investigation.

Memory recall

It is useful to know how the memory works and the factors that affect how people remember in order to understand why the investigative interview approach outlined later in this section will help with accurate recall.

It is helpful to make a three-part distinction when considering memory and the factors that will influence how well we will remember an event:

Encoding – How information is entered into memory.	This is affected by stress levels, the state of the individual at the time of the incident and attention level. To encode information we must attend to it and what we attend to depends on a person's knowledge, past experiences and expectations. This means that different people will produce different accounts of the same event.
Storing – How encoded information is then transformed into a representation that the memory receives.	No interview technique, however sophisticated, will be able to retrieve information about an event which was never stored in the memory in the first place. However once stored it should be capable of being recalled. Unfortunately, what is stored in memory is not ready to be played back like a video-recording. Instead, we store information in 'snapshots' – in various parts of our brains – and not always under the most logical filing system.
Retrieval – How we attempt to retrieve information from the memory.	As a result of the way in which we store information, when it comes to retrieval, we do not always know where to look. When we get there the information is often only a partial representation of what went on and we make sense of incomplete information by filling in the gaps by calling on our experiences and expectations of what we think ought to have happened in a given context or event.

Investigative interviewing approach

The Investigative Interview approach described below is based on good practice taken from a number of different areas. It draws heavily on the Enhanced Cognitive Interview (ECI) technique, the Conversation Management approach to interviewing and PEACE, a model of interviewing used by police forces.

The stages of the Investigative Interview approach are:

Stage 1	Planning and Preparation
Stage 2	Engage and Explain
Stage 3	Account
Stage 4	Questioning
Stage 5	Repetition
Stage 6	Closure

Stage 1 – Planning and Preparation

The crucial elements of good planning are:

- understanding the purpose of the interview
- obtaining as much background information as possible on the incident under investigation
- defining the aims and objectives of the interview so you understand and recognise the points that need to be covered and what information you want to obtain from the witnesses
- assessing what other evidence is needed and how it can be obtained
- preparing the mechanics of the interview (logistics, venue etc)

Specifically, things to think about are:

Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ideally, interviews should be held close to the witness's place of work. This may prove difficult where witnesses are based at a number of locations.Avoid a location where there may be loud background noise.
----------	--

Layout of room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep it as simple as possible. • The witness should, ideally be seated nearest the door. • Avoid strong light shining in the witness's eyes or positioned where the lead investigation/investigation team will be sat with their back to a window making it difficult for the witness to see who is asking a question. • The number of investigation team members and the use of recording equipment may make this difficult, but try to keep the witness position close to where the main interviewer will be seated.
Note taking	If the interview is not being recorded, it is best to arrange for someone to take notes (perhaps another member of the investigation team) or a note taker if available; it is difficult to conduct an effective interview whilst also taking notes of what is said.
Recording	Inform the witness if the interview will be recorded and explain why. See the Recording the witness interview sub-section below.
Reviewing evidence and preparing questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the evidence already available to gain an idea of what you may wish to find out from each witness. • See Appendix B 'Investigator Prompts' of Part 2A of the handbook for examples, based on the 10 Incident Factors (for which see Part 4 of the handbook) of some questions that may need to be asked.
Diagrams, photos, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally, diagrams and photos, etc. can help avoid misunderstandings about what happened when and where. • These are helpful in gaining understanding of what happened. They can help some witnesses explain what happened and it can be helpful to ask the witness to draw something. • Bear in mind that some witnesses may not be able to read maps or technical drawings and some details may need to be explained to them.

Whilst interviews conducted immediately post incident as part of the process of gathering witness statements do not offer the same opportunities for planning, the same principles apply.

It is important to remain open-minded throughout all stages of the interview process starting with the planning and preparation stage. Whilst you may have an opinion about what happened this should not get in the way of exploring all the possibilities.

Confirmation bias

All too often interviewers are guided by their own 'script' of the event with the result that relevant and vital information may be overlooked, screened out, ignored or forgotten leading to confirmation bias and the illusion that they "already know the answer".

Confirmation bias is the tendency to seek out, listen for and place significance upon only that information which confirms your hypothesis of what happened. This can be avoided by being aware of it, remaining open-minded and following the stages of the investigative interview approach.

Stage 2 – Engage and Explain

The second stage involves **establishing rapport** and helping the witness to feel more comfortable, at ease, confident and secure. A witness may feel nervous and anxious about the event they have been involved in – and by being interviewed – and this could hinder the interview and the amount and quality of the information provided if it is not addressed as early as possible.

Building rapport involves:

- a) being polite and courteous;
- b) taking the time to find out about the individual and take steps to address any issues and concerns they have;
- c) listening and showing that you are genuinely interested in what they have to say.

Rapport will also be influenced by your body language and by the layout of the room so make sure you:

- a) Introduce yourself and either introduce the others present (including, where appropriate, a note taker) or get them to do so individually;
- b) make and maintain eye contact with the witness;
- c) use the witness's name;
- d) use open gestures;
- e) position the seats to allow for both connection and space;

In addition, it is important that the witness knows what is expected of them during the interview because this kind of investigation may be alien to them. This will help to put them at ease.

Explain the interview process telling them that:

- a) they will be invited to give an account in their own words of the situation under investigation;
- b) the investigation team members will seek to clarify the account by asking them questions;
- c) they will be asked by the investigation team members to comment on matters that have not been covered or adequately explained;
- d) the lead investigator will summarise what they have said.

Explain the investigation's aims are to:

- Establish the facts – what happened and what and who was involved
- Identify the causes – why the accident/incident happened
- Propose actions to prevent a recurrence or mitigate the consequences.

The investigation is not about establishing blame or liability, it is about learning from our mistakes so we can do something to prevent them happening again.

It is also important to establish certain ground rules with witnesses by explaining that:

- what they have to say is important so they need to report everything and not edit the information as they go even if they believe some information has no relevance to the event being investigated;
- they will be working hard because they are the ones with the information;
- they are in control of the interview and it will proceed at their pace;
- they should feel free to say if they do not understand a question or if they do not know the answer to a question to avoid information being guessed at or made up.

If the interview is being recorded, explain why – see the [Recording the witness interview](#) sub-section below.

The interviewer's role is primarily to **facilitate** and to help the witness recall what happened and/or to help elicit useful information relevant to establishing the causes and potential mitigation measures.

Stage 3 – Account

This is where the interviewer obtains the witness's full account of the event. If the witness is an individual who was directly involved in the event you should ask them to:

- re-visit the scene and to use all their senses to describe the scene;
- explain in their own words what happened, at their own pace.

For example:

"You were involved in a SPAD this morning. Tell me everything you can, even the things you do not think are important and even if you can not remember something completely. Take your time and tell me anything that comes to mind".

Or this:

"Take yourself back to the incident. Get the picture in your mind. Where were you? What did you see? How did you feel? What did you hear? When you are ready I want to hear about the whole incident, at your own pace, from the beginning I want to hear all the details even if they seem unimportant or you are not completely sure."

Returning to the context in which the information was encoded helps the recall process.

Using all their senses in the recall process (what did they hear, see, smell?) can help unlock memories that have not always been stored logically with the general memory about the event.

For those witnesses who were not directly involved in the event but are supplying relevant information it is best to start with open questions:

"Tell me about....."

"Describe (the process for)...."

"Explain (your role)....."

Stage 4 – Question

This is an opportunity for clarification. Explain to the witness that this phase of the interview will involve questions about the information the witness has just given because this is proven to provide more information, not because the witness's testimony is not believed or perceived as faulty.

For example:

"I am now going to ask you some questions based on what you have already told me. It is fine to say 'I don't know' to any questions you do not know the answer to. Tell me everything you can remember in response to each question."

Use probing questions to seek clarification on issues, i.e. who, what, where, when, and why, and make sure the questions are in a logical sequence that follows the way the information was provided by the witness. Probing questions should still generate information rather than just a "yes" or "no" response and are useful for building up a more detailed picture of what happened and/or why.

For example, asking "What PPE were you wearing?" provides information that the question "Were you wearing the correct PPE?" would not have elicited.

Use closed questions to confirm the information being provided or to elicit information that has not been provided during the account phase. For example, "Were you the driver?" The response to these questions will normally be "yes" or "no."

Closed questions are useful for obtaining specific information and asking for specific details such as times, distances, layouts, names. They can be an effective strategy for eliciting cues to the honesty of the account being provided.

The order of the questioning should resemble the structure of the witness's account and should not be based on the interviewer's notion or script of what happened, or should have happened. This will help the witness remember details and give an accurate account.

Other things to remember when questioning include:

Avoid multiple questions or questions with multiple parts. For example: <i>"Did you see the train? Was it approaching from the branch or main?"</i>	The problems with such multiple questions are that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) the witness does not know which part of the question to answer and means they will be trying to remember both parts whilst also trying to retrieve the information required to answer;b) they can lead to confusion between interviewer and witness about what part of the question is being responded to.
Use the same language as the witness	This demonstrates listening and avoids putting additional pressure on the witness in understanding and interpreting the meaning of the questions.
Allow the witness time to understand each question, think about it, formulate their answer and deliver it.	This means not interrupting and allowing for silence during the interview.

Listen to the answers being provided and demonstrate understanding of the information being provided.

This can be achieved by:

- summarising – demonstrates active listening and allows you to check your understanding and helps you, as the interviewer, commit the information to memory;
- echo probing – reiterating part of what the witness has said using their exact words and by repeating them with inflexion in the form of a question. This demonstrates active listening and will encourage the witness to elaborate.

Avoid confirmation bias and prematurely closing down the questioning

Preparing your questions in advance, as part of Stage 1 will help with this stage of the interview and with avoiding confirmation bias. It may prove difficult for an interviewer to formulate questions during the interview and reduces the likelihood that you are actively listening to the information being provided. So preparing your questions or having a framework will make sure your questions are as comprehensive as possible and you can continue to actively listen throughout.

Stage 5 – Repetition

This is the stage where **different retrieval techniques** can be used. However, the interviewer must clearly explain to the witness that the questioning technique will continue in order to provide more information, not because their testimony is not believed or perceived as faulty. Explaining why different approaches are being used prevents suspicion and enhances transparency.

Different retrieval techniques are used because it has been shown that the more attempts a witness makes to remember a particular episode, the more information will be recalled. However, it is unlikely that simply repeating their version of events will lead to new information but using varied retrieval strategies – such as recalling things in reverse or changing the perspective – will help elicit more information.

Ask the witness to either:

- change order of recall (e.g. work backwards from the event), or
- change perspective (e.g. try to view from an onlooker's perspective) but only reporting the details they actually witnessed themselves

For example:

"Try and recall the incident in reverse order now – what is the very last thing that happened....what happened just before that? What do you think the onlooker saw from their viewpoint?"

Changing the order of recall means the witness cannot rely on their script of what "should have happened" and this has been shown to elicit more information.

Similarly, changing perspective has been shown to elicit more information because it forces the witness out of their own psychological perspective which they would use to report events.

Stage 6 – Closure

The aim of effective closure should be to leave the witness in a positive frame of mind at the end of the interview.

Summary

A key phase of closure is the summary.

Summarising the information provided by the witness, and encouraging them to add or question anything they think does not sound correct, gives them a chance to clarify that what they have contributed is correct, and that you have got all the information required.

For example:

"You told me that after your last shift you went to the hospital to visit a sick friend and only managed four hours sleep last night.... You were five minutes late clocking in but felt perfectly alert. Is that right?"

You should also tell the witness that it is acceptable to add new information at this stage of the interview.

Having summarised the information, you should explain what will happen next and thank the witness for their time and effort. For example:

"Thank you for your time and effort. I will write up the report once the interviews have been concluded. In the meantime, if you remember anything else, do not hesitate to get in touch."

Who takes the lead?

Normally, the lead investigator should take the lead in interviewing the witness.

However, where the questioning of a witness is likely to be of a specialist or technical nature, it may be appropriate for a member of the investigation team with the appropriate skills/knowledge to take the lead.

The lead investigator should make sure that where a witness is interviewed, the witness is not bombarded with questions from the investigation team – each investigation team member should be given an opportunity to ask questions and each should wait their turn;

Recording the witness interview

Research suggests that unless an investigation interview is recorded the interviewer's written report/statement is subject to loss of information because:

- a) the interviewer has to remember what was said by the witness and,
- b) then write the report.

The information reported by the witness will, therefore, also go through the memory processes of the interviewer.

Even if a report is written immediately after the interview ended it is likely the report will only contain approximately 67% of the relevant information reported by the witness.

Apart from ordinary forgetfulness, additional filters may affect the interviewer's storage and retrieval of the witness's evidence. Among other factors, scripts (a mental model of what normally happens) may guide what information is processed by the interviewer and what the interviewer pays attention to; a tendency or desire to confirm existing hypotheses may determine what is stored and later retrieved.

Interviewers will also re-word and use more standard language when writing up an interview. Such standardisation often occurs because the interviewer strives to produce a "good" statement which is characterised by sounding plausible and being chronological.

Finally, taking notes during an interview – to use to produce a summary at a later date – can also affect the quality of the interview and the subsequent summary. Whilst the interviewer is writing notes they are not fully attending to what is being said or able to give their full attention to the questions they want or may need to ask.

Therefore, being able to record interviews is important to making sure an accurate and comprehensive account of an interview is made.

Use of recording equipment

The use of recording equipment to record witness evidence is at the lead investigator's discretion.

Digital or tape recording devices are available and may be used and from which the lead investigator can summarise the evidence for the investigation report.

Where recording equipment is to be used the lead investigator should inform each witness that:

- a) the interview will be recorded for the purposes of achieving accuracy in the investigation report;
- b) a summary of the interview will be included in the investigation report;
- c) they may have a copy of the interview recording as well as the summary in the investigation report if they so wish.

The interview recording will need to be retained with the investigation file.

The recording of witness evidence should be regarded as confidential to the investigation and a request for a copy of the recording, e.g. from a police officer, should be refused and advice sought from the Head of Legal Services, Litigation.

Therefore, in normal circumstances, recordings should not be released to other parties, including RAIB, ORR and BTP. Applications for the release of interview recordings will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis; an abridged transcript may need to be provided to satisfy legal requirements.

It is not necessary to inform the witness that the interview recording may be released to external investigation agencies, i.e. RAIB, BTP and ORR.

Providing the witness with a copy of their evidence

It is not necessary for a witness to:

- be provided with a copy of any statement or evidence provided to the investigation, or
- sign any statement or evidence given at the investigation.

In the case of a formal investigation, a summary of the evidence – as included in the investigation report – may be provided to the witness.

However, where a witness is interviewed by the investigation team, the lead investigator should arrange to provide a witness a copy of any recorded evidence if so requested by the witness.

If a witness refuses to give evidence

Silence, “no comment”, non-cooperation, hostility, lying, evasion, denial of knowledge and culpability are all forms of witness resistance. One of the primary causes of such resistance may be the interviewer's own behaviour.

One typical misconception is that witnesses resist because they are guilty or have something to hide. However, unwillingness to talk can be due to a number of other reasons. For example:

- a) fear of losing their job;
- b) fear of being disciplined;
- c) fear of reactions from colleagues;
- d) they genuinely do not know anything;
- e) they genuinely cannot remember.

The latter of these is sometimes the case with front line staff who have been performing very routine activities at the time of an event. For example, driving a train becomes a very routine activity for drivers and they can often be in auto-pilot which means information is not being actively processed. In this instance they genuinely may not be able to recall the signal aspect because it has not been encoded into their memory.

It is important that you, as the interviewer, are aware of all the possible reasons for resistance as it will help you identify and manage the co-operation of the witness.

Interviewer behaviours

There are a number of interviewer behaviours which, if the steps above are followed, are more likely to facilitate co-operation, i.e.:

- being non-judgemental and not having pre-conceived ideas about what happened and why;
- being empathetic and showing that you understand this may be a challenging experience for the witness;
- being able to talk as equals – actively listening to what is being said; repeating back your understanding about what you are being told; asking sensible questions.

Sometimes it is useful – and may become necessary – to remind the witness of their obligations to cooperate with the investigation. For example:

- Employees have a contractual duty to co-operate in the carrying out of their employer's business.
- Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 imposes a duty on employees to co-operate with their employer to carry out their duties under the Act.

The witness's evidence may be crucial to understanding what happened and why, and their refusal to provide their version of events or to answer the investigation team's questions may influence the investigation team's conclusions.

Should a witness continue to fail to co-operate fully, the investigation team will need to explore whether other sources of evidence that can assist in 'filling in the gaps'.

If not, the investigation team will need to do one of the following:

- a) explore and consider the possible scenarios or sequence of events that led to the accident/incident occurring and decide, on the balance of probabilities, what it believes happened and why (i.e. the causes).
- b) consider whether it has been able to reach a satisfactory conclusion as to what happened and why.

In the absence of evidence from key witnesses the investigation team should conclude the investigation noting that the conclusions reached are in the absence of key information. This will need to be discussed and explained in the 'Factors discussed' section of the investigation report.

Managing witnesses

People are different and will have a different view on life and the world around them, so there is a need to recognise that not all interviews are the same and, therefore, there is a need to:

- be aware of any changing mood,
- be flexible,
- be adaptable.

Traumatised witness

See the 'Arranging the investigation' section of Part 2A of the handbook for further information and guidance on arrangements that may need to be made where a witness who may be traumatised by the event attends for interview.

Some witnesses may be traumatised by what they saw or may have had close ties with someone injured in the event; they may need special care and attention during their interview.

Crying can be embarrassing but it is a normal emotion and can help recovery from the trauma. In such cases it may be necessary to interrupt or suspend the interview for a time to enable a witness to recover their composure.

Confrontation

Avoid confrontation with the witness, even if you believe the witness is not being entirely honest and, in particular, avoid directly challenging a witness about the honesty of their account as this may only hinder the investigation. If a witness gets angry, you should stay calm and try to understand the reasons for such anger.

After a witness has been interviewed

Once a witness has been interviewed – and before the witness leaves the room – the investigation team will need to decide whether the witness needs to wait, in case further questioning becomes necessary.

Further questioning of a witness – or clarification of the evidence they have provided – may be required where the evidence of a subsequent witness (or witnesses) contradicts or refutes the earlier witness evidence.

If no further questioning of a witness is anticipated, the witness may be informed that they can leave.

Once the investigation is completed

Contents

Names document	42
What happens to the report once it's completed?	46
Input to SMIS and report archive	47
Review of recommendations and local actions	48
Re-issuing reports	48
Investigation file	48

Names document

The lead investigator will need to prepare a Names document that should identify the following:

- a) The people involved in the event, including:
 - name;
 - role/post detail;
 - home station, depot or base.
- b) The organisation that employed the people involved with the event.

Each person identified in the investigation, reported as playing a part in the events leading up to the event and its subsequent management, should be included in the Names document.

File-naming convention

Each Word file should have a unique file name; do not just use the default name provided by the system.

The aim of the following guidance is to standardise the file-naming in order to provide a rational and organised structure that will aid the archiving and retrieval of documents, particularly where a large number of documents will be held.

There is no need to differentiate between formal and local investigations.

Category A SPADs

The Names document should be named in accordance with the following convention:

[Signal number] SPAD [Event Type (Optional)] [Date (YYYY-MM-DD)] Names

Adding 'Names' to the file name will help distinguish it from the remit and report files for the same event.

Examples:

Event type	Example
A simple Category A SPAD.	CO183 SPAD 2009-10-15 Names
An optional event type keyword may be used to indicate a subsequent event, such as a collision, derailment or runaway.	CO183 SPAD Derailment 2009-10-15 Names
For incidents involving stop boards or limit of shunt signals (LOS), which are not numbered, the location should be added.	Norwood Stop Board SPAD 2009-10-15 Names Norwood LOS SPAD 2009-10-15 Names

Table 1 – Event type examples (Cat A SPADs)

Other accidents/incidents

The Names document for events other than SPADs should be named in accordance with the following convention:

[Location] [Event Type Keyword] [Date (YYYY-MM-DD)] Names

Examples:

Event type	Example
A simple event	Windsor Derailment 2009-11-11 Names
Accident (other than including fatality)	Cheshunt Staff Accident 2010-03-31 Names Esher Public Accident 2009-07-04 Names

Event type	Example
Fatality (Staff or public)	Seven Kings Staff Fatality 2007-12-03 Names London Bridge Public Fatality 2009-07-04
An additional event type keyword may be used to indicate a subsequent event.	Windsor Collision & Derailment 2009-11-11 Names
Level crossing incidents should include the abbreviation "LC"; the level crossing type may also be included.	Windmill Lane LC near miss 2008-02-11 Names Victory LC collision 2009-08-12 Names

Table 2 – Event type examples (Other events)

A list of the keywords to be used is shown below:

Keyword	Meaning/comment
Staff Accident	Staff/contractor accidents (excluding fatalities)
Public Accident	Public accidents (excluding fatalities)
Staff Fatality	Includes contractors
Public Fatality	Includes passengers
SPAD	Normally Cat A or D; Cat B is normally signal(ling) irregularity
Collision	Includes collisions at LC and train striking objects
Derailment	
Runaway	
WSF	Wrong side failure (usually signalling)
RRV	Road rail vehicle
Possession Irregularity	Events involving T3/T4 possession only
Protection Irregularity	Events involving T12/T2 protection only
Signalling Irregularity	Irregular operation of signalling caused by human action

Keyword	Meaning/comment
Signal Irregularity	Irregular operation of signalling with technical cause
Irregular Working	Anything not covered by the preceding four keywords

Table 3 – Keywords

Organisations

The names should be grouped by section, a section for each organisation. A separate section or page should be used for each individual organisation.

Order of appearance

The order in which the names appear in each section is not particularly important although it is likely to make the Names document easier to use if they are listed either:

- in the order they appear in the report, or
- in seniority order, starting with the most junior.

Members of the public

Members of the public may be involved directly in the incident. For example:

- a passenger injured in an incident;
- the road vehicle driver in a road vehicle incursion;
- the road vehicle driver in a level crossing accident.

They may also be involved as witnesses, when they may provide evidence about what happened.

Where members of the public are specifically referred to in the report, then the Names document should include a section for members of the public where their names and details are recorded. Where the information is available, these details should include their preferred contact address (home or business) and any phone, fax or email details.

The Names document must not be distributed with the completed investigation report.

The Names document will need to be included in the investigation file (see the [Investigation file](#) sub-section below).

What happens to the report once it's completed?

Once the investigation report has been completed and signed by the DCP the report will be published and distributed to those shown in [Table 4](#):

Recipient	Report type	
	Local	Formal
Those organisations that participated in the investigation Organisations may require as part of their safety management process that completed investigation reports are sent to a nominated person (e.g. their document controller).	✓	✓
The members of the investigation team	✓	✓
The relevant Network Rail functional senior managers (e.g. Route Director, Route Infrastructure Maintenance Director, Senior Programme Manager) and/or heads of department	✗	✓
The Network Rail recommendations programme co-ordinator	✗	✓
Any Network Rail function or department to whom recommendations or local actions have been directed	✓	✓
RSSB	✗	✓
The Office of Rail Regulation's (ORR) Information and Intelligence Team	✗	✓
The Head of Corporate Assurance & Accident Investigation (HoCAAI) where the RAIB have formally requested the investigation report be sent to them	✓	✓
The relevant Senior Investigator	✓	✓
The relevant Safety Reporting Specialist	✓	✓
The relevant Operations Risk Advisor in the case of an investigation report relating to a Category A SPAD	✓	✓

Table 4 – Recipients of completed investigation reports

The completed report should be:

- a) converted to Adobe Acrobat (i.e. PDF) file format before being distributed; and
- b) sent to each recipient's preferred e-mail address.

Input to SMIS and report archive

The Safety Reporting Specialist will arrange for details from the report to be input to SMIS.

These details should be input to SMIS within 10 working days of receipt of the investigation report.

See the 'SMIS' section in Part 7 of this handbook for more details.

The Safety Reporting Specialist will also arrange for the report to be added to a report archive held in CCMS2.

The Safety Reporting Specialist should also be sent the Names document to enable SMIS to be updated as necessary.

Review of recommendations and local actions

The role of the RRP and NRRP and the process for reviewing and progressing recommendations and local actions is shown in Part 5 of this handbook.

Re-issuing reports

Occasionally, it may be necessary to re-issue a report, for example, where new evidence/information becomes available.

If an investigation report needs to be revised and re-issued, the DCP will arrange this with the lead investigator.

In such circumstances the lead investigator will need to:

- amend the investigation report as appropriate to reflect the new evidence/information or to address any other issues;
- change the status of the report to 'Issue 2', etc.;
- include the reasons for the re-issue of the investigation report on the 'Signatures' page of the report; and
- obtain the signatures/agreement of the investigation team members to the revised report.

Investigation file

All evidence obtained by and used as part of the investigation will need to be retained with the investigation file.

The investigation file should include the following:

The completed investigation report	The completed report after it has been signed and agreed by the investigation team and the DCP.
The completed Names document	The Names document also needs to be sent to the Safety Reporting Specialist to enable SMIS to be updated as necessary.

The remit	The investigation remit, signed and dated by the DCP. Where the remit has been re-issued, all versions of the remit – signed and dated by the DCP – will need to be retained.
Signatures/agreement to the report	<p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an investigation team member's original signed 'Signature' sheet; • a faxed copy of an investigation team member's signed 'Signature' sheet; • an e-mail from an investigation team member indicating they are in agreement with the content of the report.
The evidence	<p>All the evidence obtained by the investigation team.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>See the Error! Reference source not found. section of Part 2A of the handbook for details of the types of evidence that will need to be collected.</p> <p>See also Operations Manual procedure 5-01 for details of the evidence that will need to be collected for a</p> </div>
Witness interviews	Where witnesses have been interviewed by the investigation team and these have been recorded, the recordings should be retained with the investigation file.

Table 5 – Content of investigation file

Draft versions of the investigation report

It is not necessary to keep copies of any draft versions of the investigation report with the investigation file.

Storage medium for investigation files

Evidence should not be 'stored' on desk top or lap top computers without either a hard copy or a disk copy of the evidence being held.

Hard copy

This is by far the simplest option. All evidence obtained is retained in a folder, for example, together with the completed report and Names document. However, storage of the investigation files presents a problem where office storage space is limited and there are a large number of files to be stored. A 'hard copy' of some evidence may need to be retained (see [Table 6](#) below).

CCMS2

Where this is available, CCMS2 should be used to store the evidence obtained as part of the investigation.

Disk storage

Because disks are not normally 'backed up', this option is not preferred. However, it has advantages over storing the evidence on a computer (see below) provided the disks can be easily retrieved.

Computer storage

Evidence should not be 'stored' on desktop or laptop computers without either a hard copy or a disk copy of the evidence being available. If held on computer files the evidence stored in this way may be lost, or not retrievable because:

- from time to time it will be necessary for computer storage to be 'cleansed' and evidence will be lost;
- the evidence may be stored by individuals who then leave the company, with either the evidence or access to the data lost.

The following should be considered when deciding the storage medium:

Storage space	If office storage space is limited, an electronic copy of some or all of the evidence will make best use of the available storage space prior to archiving.
Original documents	Where an original copy of a witness' report or statement is received, these may be scanned and retained with the 'electronic copy' evidence, but the original should be retained with the 'hard copy' evidence.
Scanning of documents	<p>This can be used to create electronic copies of documents received but will be dependent on the availability of scanning equipment.</p> <p>Network Rail's National Records Group (NRG) offers a scanning service so that all hard copy documents can be scanned by them.</p>
Electronic data and information	<p>Evidence that has been received in an electronic format can, obviously, be easily transferred to disk, provided these facilities exist. This includes, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• reports/statements from witnesses received in Adobe Acrobat (i.e. PDF) file formats;• voice recordings downloaded from signal box recording systems;• data received in Microsoft Excel file formats;• standards, rules and instructions downloaded from relevant websites. <p>Note that data from some recording systems (e.g. OTDR systems) may need specialised software to enable the data to be analysed and it may not be desirable to store such data electronically.</p>

Large maps/diagrams	<p>These may only be available in hard copy and it may not be possible to scan them to create an electronic file.</p> <p>Note that some diagrams/maps obtained from NRG may be available in an electronic format.</p>
Investigation report and Names document	<p>The completed investigation report should be converted to Adobe Acrobat (i.e. PDF) file format before it is distributed/published by the DCP.</p> <p>The Names document should also be converted to Adobe Acrobat (i.e. PDF) file format before it is put with the investigation file.</p>

Table 6 – Storage medium options

Where should the investigation files be sent?

When the lead investigator has completed the investigation with all the information shown in [Table 5](#) above, the lead investigator should arrange for the investigation file to be sent to:

Event type	Investigation file to be sent to:
Category A SPADs	The relevant Operations Risk Advisor
All other events	The relevant Safety Reporting Specialist

Table 7 – Where the investigation file should be sent

It is essential that the investigation files are sent to the post identified in [Table 7](#) to enable the investigation file to be identified and retrieved should the need arise in the future.

Progress with recommendations

Where a report includes a recommendation addressed to Network Rail, the Safety Reporting Specialist or Operations Risk Advisor will arrange for details of the progress with the recommendation to be included with the investigation file once the recommendation has been implemented and 'closed out'.

Archiving of investigation files

The Safety Reporting Specialist or Operations Risk Advisor will arrange for investigation files to be archived for storage as follows:

	Retention period
Any event subject to a formal investigation or local investigation (except in the case of Category A SPADs or any involving occupational ill-health)	A minimum of 7 years from the date when all accepted recommendations have been completed
Occupational ill-health suffered by a member of staff	For the active life of the file, plus 40 years
Category A SPAD (including where a formal or local investigation has been held)	For the active life of the file, plus 40 years

Table 8 – Retention periods for archived investigation files

This page intentionally left blank

