SCC Training
Briefing Notes
Module 2: Protocols 1

Introduction

The Safety Critical Communications training programme is modular. The full programme consists of **six** modules:

- Foundation
- Protocols 1 (ABC-P, Phonetic Alphabet, Numbers, Time)
- Structure and Lead Responsibility
- Protocols 2 (Standard Words and Phrases, Emergency Call, Equipment)
- Confirming Understanding (Repeat Back, Questioning)
- Communication Skills (Assertiveness, Challenging, Considering Others)

For best results, please deliver the modules in order. It is especially important to deliver the **Foundation Module** first. However, you may want to prioritise one of the other modules if you are faced with a particular communication issue.

Timing

The module will take at least 45 minutes to deliver. The timings are as follows:

- Core Content: 15min
- Discussions (5): 20min
- Test Questions: 10min
- Optional discussion: 4min
- Optional re-scripting exercise: 10

Discussions

Do not skip the discussions. They are essential to the learning process. Without them, the content will just be a stream of meaningless words. It is important that attendees work through the issues themselves as well as listening to the briefing material.

Try and ensure that everyone participates in the discussions. You may need to balance 'loud' individuals with those more reluctant to speak. Bear in mind that the quiet, thoughtful person at the back of the room may have a valuable contribution to make.

Your input is welcome. Your specific experience and knowledge are relevant to the discussion. You may wish to guide the discussion and make it relevant to your particular area of the industry, though please don't detract from the minimum standard set by this training course.

Notes for each discussion are provided below in the Content Notes. Don't 'wade in' with your answers too early. Let the group make their own suggestions and perhaps argue with each other.

National Minimum Standard

The standard is composed of **Key Learning Points** which are highlighted throughout the module and again, in the summary at the end. There is nothing difficult or complex about the standard. It simply seeks to set a minimum level, above which we should all be operating.

The **Key Learning Points** are**:**

1. Operational communications must be **ABC-P**: Accurate, Brief, Clear, and Professional

2. Use the **Phonetic Alphabet** for all key information.

3. Use **single numbers**, zero, one, two etc., for all key information
    -   use natural speech for weights and measures
    -   always state the units: metres, miles, kilograms

4. Use the **24-hour clock** to say time
    -   state **"hours"** to emphasise that you are giving a time
    -   use **"hundred hours"** to state 'on the hour' times such as 1100
    -   use **"twenty-four hundred hours"** in preference to "zero hundred" hours

The Test

The test is not designed to catch anyone out. It simply makes sure that attendees have understood the material. The questions are all based on the National Minimum Standard. As the Briefer, you will be responsible for delivering the questions, which are provided below.

The questions should be directed to **individuals** within the group, making sure that **each person answers at least one question**. If someone fails a question, allow the other group members to help them, and then ask them another.

Delivering the Presentation

The PowerPoint presentation contains voice-over and example communication recordings. You will therefore need to make sure that you can **deliver audio to the room** at a suitable volume.

Most of the content is voice-over driven and the **slides will auto-forward**. However, we have paused the auto-forwarding in certain places to allow you to facilitate a discussion, play an example, or check that attendees are happy with the content.

Slides which require you to press forward (space bar, forward arrow or left-mouse click) are marked with this icon in the bottom right-hand corner.
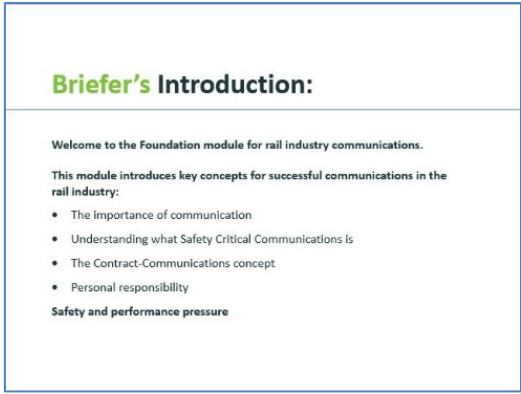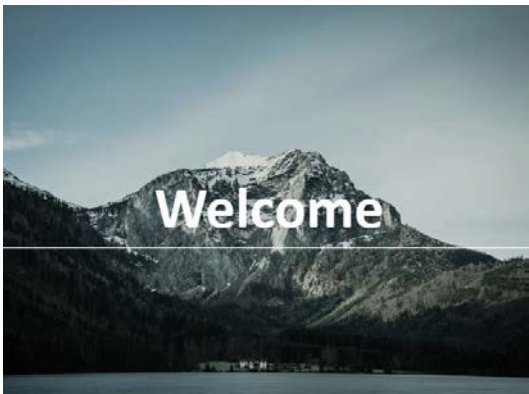
Slides containing voice-over. Note, the voice over is **sometimes delayed** to allow learners to digest the contents of a slide before listening to it. **Be patient!**

…VO pause before VO   VO… pause after the VO   VO…VO pause between VOs

Content Notes
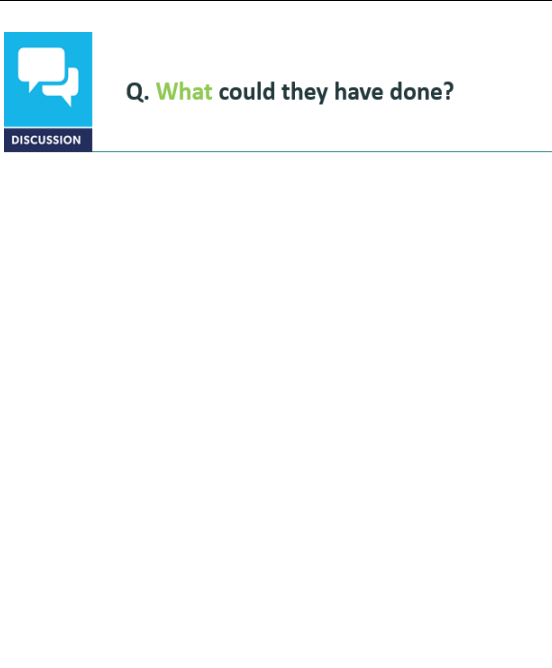
The following relate to specific content in the module. You may wish to have the module open

Page Reference	Notes
	The presentation has some notes at the beginning. These are for you, the Briefer, and not for attendees.
	This Welcome page is designed to sit on the screen while you take care of 'housekeeping' details such as fire exit and introductions.
	This first section goes over what we have learnt in the previous SCC modules.

Let's start by reminding ourselves why safety critical communications **are important.** ▶ 🎵 MP3	If you have more than 30min then please play the recording. Else move on. This poor communication resulted in a *misunderstanding* between the Signaller and Driver. The Driver, assuming he had a blockade, went out onto the track, resulting in a **near miss**. **This is based on a real incident, re-recorded using actors.**
The Nature of Communications	
Thinking about UK society: • **What** do you do when you meet someone? • **How and when** does this change? eg. job interview vs. mate down the pub vs. family member. • **Why** do we need this 'greeting' protocol? 💬 DISCUSSION	Don't skip this discussion. It might seem trivial but it helps to drive home the message that protocols are necessary things which exist in every-day life. Think about: Different types of handshakes; kissing on the cheek; high-five; hugging etc. The protocol changes according to the situation; according to the person involved. Imagine going for a job interview and hugging the person sat across the desk! Option: you may want to act out a few of the above examples (no need to overdo it) and let the attendees guess which social setting you are in.

ABC- P	Our first protocol is ABC-P. The ABC bit has been in use for many years, and your attendees may recognise it. The 'P' has recently been added – as a result of research carried out be RSSB.
Q. Take each of the THREE elements: • **Accurate** • **Brief** • **Clear** Rate the conversation against each of them on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is excellent. Replay Clip DISCUSSION	**Accurate**? No. Poor questions, poor reference to crossing, confusing. Rated 5. **Brief**? Relatively brief under the circumstances. Rate 3. **Clear**? No. No repeat back or confirmation. 5. The **verbal contract** was very poor. Note: the 'good luck' at the end is a nice touch. It shows empathy and understanding from the Signaller. **This is based on a real incident, re-recorded using actors.**
DISCUSSION **Q. What could they have done?**	Let the discussion develop before you hit the '...Reveal Answers' button. They actually have plenty of time to decide what to do and to form a tight verbal contract. The Signaller's imprecise description and use of slang make the Driver's task even harder because he needs to try and understand what has been said before he can answer. Option: if you have time, re-draft the conversation or get two attendees to act it out. You could get one of them to try and rush so that the other can calm the situation. MODEL ANSWER: the next slide contains a model conversation. Skip this if you are short on time. The model is intended to be realistic – it's not overly polished.

The Phonetic Alphabet	This section looks at why we use the Phonetic Alphabet, when to use it, and provides a little practice in doing so.
WHY USE **The Phonetic Alphabet?** DISCUSSION	Don't skip this discussion. Many attendees will have been using the phonetic alphabet for years without thinking about why they do so. It's important to understand the 'why' before moving on to the 'when' and 'how.' You don't need to provide answers – we'll do that in the next couple of slides.
The Phonetic Alphabet: A Alpha B Bravo C Charlie D Delta E Echo F Foxtrot G Golf H Hotel I India J Jullett K Kllo L Llma M Mike N November O Oscar P Papa Q Quebec R Romeo S Sierra T Tango U Uniform V Victor W Whiskey Class practice: using phonetics, spell: your surname; your company; the day	Get each attendee to have a go at using the alphabet. You can use your own subjects or the ones provided. Attendees who are familiar with the Phonetic alphabet should not be allowed to look at the screen. Attendees who are unfamiliar with the Phonetic alphabet may look at the screen. Attendees who use the Phonetic alphabet daily and are dismissive of this exercise should be given difficult words to spell, eg. Chettisham, Marylebone. Hint: if you need to remove the blue banner from the screen, hit the 'back' arrow. You will have to listen to the VO again though.
The Phonetic Alphabet – Example Play the recording and answer the questions. ▶ MP3	Line Blockage explanation: if you are not familiar with them, a line blockage is a frequent activity whereby a Signaller blocks a line at the request of a Controller of Site Safety (COSS). Don't get 'bogged down' in the detail. What is important is that the Signaller and the COSS must make sure that they are speaking to the correct person (**the Signaller could be handling lots of line blockages at the same time**) and that they have all the details agreed. To help with this, they use a line blockage form.

	This is based on a real incident, re-recorded using actors.
Was the conversation: Accurate? Brief? Clear? **Was the conversation professional? If not, why not?** **Was the phonetic alphabet used correctly?** DISCUSSION	**Accurate**? No. Poor handling of all information **Brief**? Fairly brief. **Clear**? No - especially regarding the length of time the blockage is required. There are no 'repeat backs' or confirmation of actions. The signaller didn't get a clear answer to his question of "how long?" **Professional**? No. No lead from the Signaller, lots of 'errrrs,' too much extra information and emotional language. **Phonetic Alphabet**? Some. The COSS didn't use it for his name. He should have. The Signaller did use the phonetic alphabet for his own name but should have asked the COSS to use it.
Saying Numbers	This section looks at how to communicate key numerical information clearly.
Weights & Measures	This section looks at the use of natural language for communicating weights and measures.

Time	Communicating information relating to time is surprisingly complex. We've dedicated a whole section of this module to it.
Module Review	This section provides an opportunity to review the module. There is some introductory text and then a list of the Key Learning Points. For the list, you need to hit the space bar to reveal each point. You could run this as a question-and-answer session, asking the attendees to provide the Key Learning Points, though you may need to give hints.
KEY LEARNING 1 Operational communications must be **ABC-P**: Accurate, Brief, Clear, and Professional 2 Use the **Phonetic Alphabet** for all key information. 3 Use **single numbers, zero, one, two** etc., for all key information - use natural speech for weights and measures - always state the units: **metres, miles, kilograms** 4 Use the **24-hour clock** to say time, - state **"hours"** to emphasise that you are giving a time - use **"hundred hours"** to state 'on the hour' times such as 1100 - use **"twenty-four hundred hours"** in preference to **"zero hundred"** hours	Throw the question out to the attendees. Hit the space bar to reveal the answer for each point.
Module Conclusion	This section concludes this module and looks forward to the remaining modules. On the last slide, there's a note to remind you to conduct a short test.

Test Questions

This module has presented the first 'Protocols' course for Safety Critical Communications (there will be a second one later in the series). The National Minimum Standard requires that attendees understand the following Key Learning Points:

The **Key Learning Points** are**:**

5. Operational communications must be **ABC-P**: Accurate, Brief, Clear, and Professional

6. Use the **Phonetic Alphabet** for all key information.

7. Use **single numbers**, zero, one, two etc., for all key information
    -   use natural speech for weights and measures
    -   always state the units: metres, miles, kilograms

8. Use the **24-hour clock** to say time
    -   state **"hours"** to emphasise that you are giving a time
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Questions

Because this is a protocols course, the questions are based around understanding and performing the key learning points. Ie. the questions are based on knowing and doing.

Ask questions of *individuals* and make sure that everyone in the group answers at least one question. You will need to use your own judgement for some of the answers.

1. **Q. The first protocol we looked at was ABC-P. What does the 'A' stand for? Provide an example.**

    A. Accurate. The example should concern an item of key information such as a time, signal, train code etc.

2. **Q. The first protocol we looked at was ABC-P. What does the 'B' stand for?**

    A. Brief.

3. **Q. The first protocol we looked at was ABC-P. What does the 'C' stand for?**

    A. Clear.

4. **Q. The first protocol we looked at was ABC-P. What does the 'P' stand for? Provide an example of un-professional communication.**

    A. Professional. The course talks about not letting our feelings creep into our communication – complaining about a situation, whingeing and moaning, going off-topic, etc.

5. **Q. In one of our example communications, the Signaller stated that the driver had "struck in…" How does this break the ABC-P protocol?**

    A. It is not accurate or clear. The term is confusing to the driver. The Signaller should have used a more precise description.

6. **Q. Why do we use the phonetic alphabet?**

    A. It helps with clarity. We often communicate in difficult situations – poor connections, noisy environments, bad weather. The phonetic alphabet helps us communicate key information clearly.

7. **Q. Ask each attendee to spell their surname using the phonetic alphabet.**

8. **When should we use the phonetic alphabet?**

    A. We should use it for all key information.

9. **Ask each attendee to say their mobile phone number using safety critical protocols. They can make one up if they don't want to give their actual number.**

    A. Each number should be said singly; '0' is zero, not 'ohh'; numbers should be said in batches: zero seven seven one two…. three four five… six seven eight

10. **Q. Explain why the time 2400 (twenty four hundred) hours is a confusing time.**

    A. Because 2400 on a Monday night is the same as 0000 on a Tuesday morning.

11. **Q. Write the following onto a whiteboard or hand out pieces of paper. Each attendee should say an item from the list:**

11:22	**eleven twenty two hours**
1350	**thirteen fifty hours**
1915	**seventeen fifteen hours**
1000 L of fuel	**one thousand litres of fuel**
22 miles	**twenty two miles**
0950	**zero nine fifty hours**
09:50	**zero nine fifty hours**
3pm	**fifteen hundred hours**
15:00	**fifteen hundred hours**
1500	**fifteen hundred hours**
12:00 midday	**twelve hundred hours**
1200 midnight	**twenty four hundred hours or zero hours**
1256kg	**one thousand two hundred and fifty six kilograms**