

Briefing Guidance Note on RICF Emergency Working Principles

The GB railway is made up of over 20,000 track miles, 2566 stations directly employing circa 100,000 rail workers (60,000 TOC and 40,000 NR). In addition, there are approximately another circa 20,000 workers employed via contracts in the industry supply chain.

In normal circumstances approximately 25,000 trains a day run with the last known figure of 1.75bn passenger journeys undertaken annually.

With the advent of the Coronavirus pandemic and the government lockdown whilst the railways have continued to run rail services these have been reduced to circa 50% for passengers with 12,700 services. Passenger usage is down to about 5% of normal levels with predominately key and essential workers currently travelling.

As a result of the lockdown all rail companies have curtailed activities and where possible have implemented staff working from home, furloughed or stood down.

The government have given indications that they will relax lockdown at some stage later this month but have not yet provided clear information on the timeline or how and if it will be phased.

When the government relax the current lockdown conditions it is expected to lead to an increased usage of the railway but it is not known how quickly that will happen. It is our current assumption that the Government will seek to maintain measures such as the 2-metre social distancing guideline but it is not clear for how long or at what stage in combatting the virus it will be safe to revise this guideline.

To manage the response to any relaxation of lockdown for rail employees and passengers the RICF has produced a set of principles that at both industry wide level and company level allow for proper discussion on introducing controls and measures to protect staff and passengers.

These principles are based on a number of key assumptions: -

1. That the 2-metre social distancing guideline shall be in place until advised differently
2. That to facilitate to such a guideline, planned capacity on trains will be reduced to an average of 20%. Depending on train set configuration this could be as low as 15% or as high as 30%.
3. There will be an incremental increase in usage as the Government relaxes lockdown
4. There will need to be an incremental increase in trains to facilitate increase in usage in order to plan for managing social distancing
5. Information and guidance will be issued to passengers to help control and limit demand and will reinforce the need for self-policing of social distancing
6. Protective equipment provisions and standards will be determined by risk assessments.

At this time, the railway is still in **PHASE ONE** of the coronavirus pandemic and is running a reduced passenger service for predominately key and essential workers. There will be further phases as lockdown is relaxed.

PHASE TWO A -is likely to commence from 18th May and will be a stepped increase in train services. Subject to lockdown relaxation messaging, it is our current assumption the initial usage increase will not be high. This short phase will also allow testing and refinement of measures that would come out of the discussions agreed via the RICF principles for relaxation lockdown.

PHASE TWO B - would be expected to follow soon after and involve further increases of usage, noting the average 20% loading capacity constraint and average 70% of trains operating and as result of the government lockdown relaxation.

Further phases would occur as the Government incrementally relaxes lockdown whilst retaining social distancing measures and this would entail increasing the number of services needed to be run.

The increase in train services and passenger usage has an impact on workers employed across the rail industry who support the running of trains, Network Rail, Train Maintenance and the supply chain. The RICF principles are designed to support the arrangements already in place to protect these workers and local discussions need to take place to enable social distancing guidance and protections of these key workers will be maintained. The overriding purpose of the RICF principles and earlier arrangements has been to protect rail industry workers by reducing exposure to Coronavirus and protecting those required to be at work to provide a rail service for the nation.

At each stage, the RICF principles ensure that discussions will take place at industry-wide level and help to ensure that any concerns or problems are addressed in good time, incorporate learnings and maintain real and effective dialogue with all the key stakeholders in the industry.

There will also come a time when the government is likely to relax the current social distancing guidelines, but we do not yet know when this will happen. At this stage the industry is committed to having further discussions at the earliest opportunity with the rail trade unions to discuss the implications of any changes to such measures once announced.