



APTA STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

STANDARD

American Public Transportation Association
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Rail Transit Track Allocation Program Requirement

Abstract: This document provides standard requirements for rail transit agencies (RTAs) in establishing a program to formalize the core requirements of allocating access to the track and guideway so that roadway workers and dispatchers/controllers/operators are aware of all work activity by specific location.

Keywords: guideway, right-of-way, track allocation

Summary: This standard provides RTAs with the baseline requirements for managing the allocation of access to employees and contractors performing work on or near the right-of-way, including track and guideway. The standard is intended to create a framework for track rights priorities and access ground rules, requesting access, approving access, creation and management of general orders, and tracking and documentation of access requests and access itself.

Scope and purpose: The purpose of this document is to develop a standard to plan and implement track allocation in an organized fashion so that roadway workers, dispatchers/controllers/operators, and other affected employees are aware of work activity at specific locations on, near or affecting the right-of-way. The purpose of this standard is to have a formal, repeatable and documented process for granting work rights and verifying that work plans are created in accordance with RTA rules/requirements and to manage competing interests for accessing the right-of-way.

This document represents a common viewpoint of those parties concerned with its provisions, namely transit operating/planning agencies, manufacturers, consultants, engineers, and general interest groups. APTA standards are mandatory to the extent incorporated by an applicable statute or regulation. In some cases, federal and/or state regulations govern portions of a transit system's operations. In cases where this is a conflict or contradiction between an applicable law or regulation and this document, consult with a legal advisor to determine which document takes precedence.

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Introduction

APTA recommends the use of this document by:

- individuals or organizations that operate rail transit systems;
- individuals or organizations that contract with others for the operation of rail transit systems; and
- individuals or organizations that influence how rail transit systems are operated (including but not limited to consultants, designers and contractors).

Note on alternate practices

Individual rail transit systems may modify the practices in this standard to accommodate their specific equipment and mode of operation. APTA recognizes that some rail transit systems may have unique operating environments that make strict compliance with every provision of this standard impossible. As a result, certain rail transit systems may need to implement the standards and practices herein in ways that are more or less restrictive than this document prescribes. A rail transit system may develop alternates to APTA standards so long as the alternates are based on a safe operating history and are described and documented in the system's safety program plan (or another document that is referenced in the system safety program plan).

Documentation of alternate practices shall:

- identify the specific APTA rail transit safety standard requirements that cannot be met;
- state why each of these requirements cannot be met;
- describe the alternate methods used; and
- describe and substantiate how the alternate methods do not compromise safety and provide a level of safety equivalent to the practices in the APTA safety standard (operating histories or hazard analysis findings may be used to substantiate this claim).

Rail Transit Track Allocation Program Requirement

1. Track allocation and guidelines

The rail transit agency shall establish track allocation program requirements that clearly define the process to schedule and authorize access to the right-of-way (ROW), track or system and the priorities that shall be considered when allocating access.

1.1 Track allocation priorities

The RTA shall identify any requirements for allocating access on, near or affecting the ROW and which types of activities have priority.

1.2 Emergencies impacting revenue service

The RTA shall identify the requirements or criteria for allocating access for work to be performed as the result of an emergency or unforeseen situation in which immediate work must be performed to minimize impacts on revenue service.

1.3 Service delivery and support considerations

The RTA track allocation process shall be designed to take into consideration impacts on service delivery or support. The RTA shall determine if it will include the following:

- maximum number of work sites the RTA can safely and efficiently support
- maximum number of simultaneous track closures allowed during revenue hours

1.4 RTA and non-RTA contractor permitting considerations

The RTA shall identify permitting requirements for contractors performing work directly for the RTA, as well as those performing adjacent work that may impact RTA operations. The RTA shall require this information to be included in the site-specific work plan (SSWP).

2. Track allocation process management

The RTS shall identify its means of managing the track allocation process. The RTA may establish a track allocation committee composed of impacted operations and maintenance managers, as well as other affected departmental managers, to be determined by the RTA. Smaller RTAs may establish a smaller working group. In either case, the result is a group of stakeholders who are responsible for making decisions about the track allocation process and for managing the provisions outlined in this standard.

3. Submitting track allocation requests—system of record

The RTA shall develop a formal process for all parties to submit track allocation requests. The RTA shall develop a method for formally recording and tracking all requests and the status of such requests.

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The RTA shall develop a process that takes into account the following:

- scope of activities
- specification of infrastructure location/area (e.g., roadway, non-roadway, yard) or system element (e.g., SCADA, traction power, ventilation)
- coordination of competing projects, projects of various sizes or priority, and/or projects where “piggybacking” (multiple projects working concurrently in the same area or adjacent areas) can be arranged
- prioritization of projects, including determination of what qualifies as an “emergency” project that receives a higher priority and how such emergency requests are approved
- type of power outage
- recording activity (e.g., reporting time, work time, clearance times, canceled times)
- duration of the request
- name, title and other pertinent contact information (e.g., phone number, email address, agency/contractor name) about the request and requesting organization

4. Site-specific work plan

The RTA shall identify its requirements for any party conducting extensive work on, near or affecting the ROW to incorporate the RTA’s Track Allocation Program Plan into its Site Specific Work Plan (SSWP).

The RTA shall establish a protocol for reviewing and approving the track allocation plan contained within the SSWP.

The SSWP shall include but not be limited to the following:

- description of work activity
- methods to protect and identify the work area or zone
- methods to protect and account for personnel approved access into the work area or zone
- supervision or oversight of work activity to include the employee in charge (EIC)
- emergency point(s) of contact (both on- and off-site)

5. Approval process

The RTA shall develop a requirement for following an established approval schedule. The RTA shall determine what considerations may affect the timing of track allocation requests and how this may impact operations when individuals are allowed access. The RTA shall consider the following possible factors as part of its scheduling requirements, as applicable:

- revenue versus nonrevenue work
- contract versus in-house work
- construction
- stakeholder/board approval, as necessary
- outside party (e.g., municipality, highway authority) approval
- determination of need for public notification of service impacts

The RTA shall identify how its track allocation process involves internal and external stakeholders who will be affected by the track allocation request.

6. Distribution of track allocation information

6.1 Internal information distribution

The RTA shall identify requirements for development and distribution of internal track allocation information to share track access and outage information with affected groups (e.g., roadway workers, control center personnel, operators). The RTA may consider posting track allocation schedules on bulletin boards, on the RTA intranet or via some other means.

6.2 External information distribution

The RTA shall identify the process for notifying contractors or other outside parties requesting track access of the RTA's decision to grant access.

The RTA shall identify any requirements for notification of public relations or other groups within the agency for information sharing with external media about impacts on service and/or impacts on surrounding communities due to the nature of the work being performed.

7. Authorization to commence work

The RTA shall identify a process in which once the track allocation request is approved, authorization to commence work is required in accordance with the RTA's roadway worker protection (RWP) program, rules and procedures.

8. Suspension, revocation or modification of track allocation

The RTA shall identify the requirements for suspending, revoking or modifying track allocation. The RTA shall identify the requirements for distributing information related to any suspension, revocation or modification of track allocation.

9. Coordination and tracking of records/documentation

The RTA shall identify its documentation requirements for retaining records of track allocation, including approvals, close information and any modifications made after initial approval.

10. APTA standard on RWP

This standard does not address specific RWP issues. The RTA shall incorporate any RWP requirements into its track allocation program as appropriate. The topic of RWP is addressed in APTA RT-OP-S-016-11, "Roadway Worker Protection Program Requirements."

Related APTA standards

- APTA RT-OP-S-004-03**, “Work Zone Safety” (previously known as APTA-RT-S-OP-004-03)
- APTA RT-OP-S-010-03**, “Contractor’s Responsibility for Right-of-Way Safety” (previously known as APTA-RT-S-OP-010-03)
- APTA RT-OP-S-016-10**, “Roadway Worker Protection Program Requirements” (previously known as APTA-RT-S-OP-016-10)
- APTA RT-OP-S-021-15**, “On-Track Equipment Safety Requirements”

Definitions

For the purposes of this standard, the following terms and definitions apply. The job titles listed below are used in this standard for informational purposes only. It is up to the individual RTA to determine and utilize titles as it finds appropriate.

- operator:** The onboard employee who controls the movement of a train or other on-track equipment.
- rail transit agency (RTA):** An organization that operates passenger train service and its supporting activities.
- right-of-way:** The area at track level or above track level at a distance from the centerline of the track, as specified by the RTA.
- track allocation:** The management, scheduling and authorization of access by employees and contractors to perform work on, near or adjacent to the right-of-way or any RTA facilities.

Abbreviations and acronyms

- EIC** employee in charge
- NATSA** North American Transportation Services Association
- RTA** rail transit agency
- RWP** roadway worker protection
- SCADA** supervisory control and data acquisition
- SSWP** site-specific work plan

Summary of document changes

- Inclusion of new introductory language specific to the track allocation topic.
- Clarification of term “piggybacking” and addition of information for track allocation request requirements in Section 3.
- Addition of “highway authority” in Section 5.
- Addition of requirement for notification of contractors of approval decision in Section 6.2. Clarification of external, affected party notification in the same section.
- Various minor editorial fixes.

Document history

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