



APTA STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

RAIL STANDARD

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APTA Rail Transit Operating Practices Working
Group

Rail Transit Track Allocation Program Requirements

Abstract: This document provides standard requirements for Rail Transit Systems 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: track allocation, right of way, guideway

Summary: This Standard provides Rail Transit Systems 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: This standard applies to rail transit systems. The standard does not apply to commuter railroads that operate on the general railroad system regulated by the Federal Railroad Administration. The purpose is to develop a standard to plan and implement track allocation in an organized fashion so that roadway workers, dispatchers/controllers/operators, or other affected employees are aware of work activity at specific locations on, near, or affecting the right-of-way.

This *Rail Standard* represents a common viewpoint of those parties concerned with its provisions, namely, transit operating/planning agencies, manufacturers, consultants, engineers and general interest groups. The application of any standards, practices or guidelines contained herein is voluntary. In some cases, federal and/or state regulations govern portions of a transit system's operations. In those cases, the government regulations take precedence over this standard. NATSA (North America Transit Services Association) and its parent organization APTA recognizes that for certain applications, the standards or practices, as implemented by individual transit agencies, may be either more or less restrictive than those given in this document.

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Participants

The American Public Transportation Association greatly appreciates the contributions of Charles Dziduch, Scott Grott, Tom Tupta, Roy Aguilera, Michael Avery, John Humphrey, Greg Robinson, Jim Foley, and Steve Lino, who provided the primary effort in the drafting of this *Rail Standard*

At the time this standard was completed, the Operating Practices Working Group included the following members:

Charlie Dziduch, *Chair*
Duane Sayers, *First Vice Chair*
David Murphy, *Second Vice Chair*

Tony Abdallah	Lynnetta Leeds
Ray Abraham	Stephen Lino
Roy Aguilera	Jason Lurz
Michael Avery	Reginald Mason
Gina Balderas	Pat McBride
Vern Barnhart	Harry McCall
William Bell	Bill McClellan
Patrick Brouard	Pat McWilliams
Bill Capps	Amanda Nightingale
Paul Denison	David Puglisi
Ray Diggs	Greg Robinson
Brian Dwyer	Ben Simms
Jim Foley	Terry Spratt
Larry Gaul	Russell Stone
Scott Grott	John Squitieri
Melvyn Henry	David Steadman
Gary Howard	Debra Thacker
John Humphrey	Tom Tupta
Rob Huyck	Denis Van Dyke
Paul Jamieson	John Weber
Jhaun Jasper	Greg Woods
Rich Krisak	David Wright
Jim Kelly	

Project Consultant:
 Christopher Wallgren,
Transportation Resource Associates, Inc.

Project Team
 Charles Joseph
American Public Transportation Association

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Introduction

This introduction is not a part of APTA RT-OP-S-020-14 *Standard for Rail Transit Track Allocation Program Requirements*.

This standard represents a common viewpoint of those parties concerned with its provisions, namely transit operating/planning agencies, rail transit systems, manufacturers, consultants, engineers and general interest groups. The application of any standards or recommended practices contained herein is voluntary. In some cases, federal and/or state regulations govern portions of a rail transit system's operations. In those cases, the government regulations take precedence over this standard. APTA recognizes that for certain applications, the standards or recommended practices, as implemented by individual rail transit systems, may be either more or less restrictive than those given in this document.

Note on alternate practices

Individual rail transit systems (RTSs) may modify the practices in this standard to accommodate their specific equipment and/or mode of operation. APTA recognizes that some RTSs may have unique operating environments that make strict compliance with every provision of this standard impractical. As a result, certain RTSs may need to implement the standards and practices herein in ways that are more or less restrictive than what this document prescribes. An RTS may develop alternates to the APTA standards as long as the alternates are based on a safe operating history and are described and documented in the RTS's System Safety Program Plan (SSPP) or another document that is referenced in the SSPP.

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).

It must be noted that rail transit is not directly comparable to railroads (e.g. Amtrak, commuter, freight rail, etc). Rail transit systems differ greatly in the types of service, vehicles and technology employed, with some systems operating fully automated trains on exclusive rights-of-way and others operating on streets mixed with traffic. Rail transit demands a unique approach to solving its problems, and the APTA Rail Transit Standards Program was enacted to accomplish this complex task.

Rail Transit System Track Allocation Program Requirements

1. Track allocation and guidelines

The Rail Transit System (RTS) shall establish a track allocation program that clearly defines the process to schedule and authorize access to the right of way, track, or system and the priorities that shall be considered when allocating access.

1.1 Track allocation priorities

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

1.2 Emergencies impacting revenue service

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

1.3 Service delivery and support considerations

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

- Maximum number of work sites the RTS can safely and efficiently support.
- Maximum number of simultaneous track closures allowed during revenue hours.

2. Submitting track allocation requests – system of record

The RTS shall develop a formal process for all parties to submit Track Allocation requests. The RTS shall develop a method for recording all requests and the status of such requests.

The RTS 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)
- Conflict resolution
- Type of power outage
- Recording activity (e.g. reporting time, work time, clearance times, cancelled times)
- Duration of the request, and
- Name, title and other pertinent information about the requester.

3. Site specific work plan

The RTS shall identify its requirements for any party conducting extensive work on, near, or affecting the right of way to incorporate the RTS' Track Allocation Program Plan into its Site Specific Work Plan (SSWP).

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

The SSWP shall include but not limited to:

- 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 Employee In Charge (EIC)

4. Approval process

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

- Revenue versus non-revenue work
- Contract versus in-house work
- Construction
- Stakeholder / board approval, as necessary
- Outside party (e.g. municipality) approval

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

5. Distribution of track allocation information

5.1 Internal information distribution

The RTS 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).

5.2 External information distribution

The RTS 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.

6. Authorization to commence work

Once track allocation request is approved, authorization to commence work is required in accordance with the RTS' RWP Program and Rules and Procedures.

7. Suspension, revocation, or modification of track allocation

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

8. Coordination and racking of records / documentation

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

9. APTA standard on Roadway Work Protection

This Standard does not address specific roadway worker protection issues. The RTS shall incorporate any RWP requirements into its Track Allocation Program, as appropriate. The topic of RWP is addressed in APTA Standard RT-OP-S-016-11 – Standard for Roadway Worker Protection Program Requirements.

Other related APTA standards

The Standard for Rail Transit Track Allocation Program Requirements contains information that is directly related to other APTA Standards. The following Standard(s) contain information directly related to subjects within this Standard.

- APTA-RT-OP-S-004-03 *Standard for Work Zone Safety*
(Note: APTA document numbering nomenclature has changed – hence the referenced standard was previously known as APTA-RT-S-OP-004-03)
- APTA-RT-OP-S-010-03 *Standard for Contractor's Responsibility for Right-of-Way Safety*
- (Note: APTA document numbering nomenclature has changed – hence the referenced standard was previously known as APTA-RT-S-OP-010-03)
- APTA-RT-OP-S-016-10 *Standard for Roadway Protection Program Requirements*
(Note: APTA document numbering nomenclature has changed – hence the referenced standard was previously known as APTA-RT-S-OP-016-10)

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 RTS 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 system (RTS): 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 RTS.

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 RTS facilities.

Abbreviations and acronyms

APTA	American Public Transportation Association
EIC	employee in charge
NATSA	North American Transit Standards Association
RTS	rail transit system

SCADA supervisory control and data acquisition
SSWP site specific work plan

Summary of document changes

This is a new document, hence no changes.

Document history

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