

Rail Traffic Horn Use

Code of Practice



This Rail Industry Safety and Standards Board (RISSB) product has been developed using input from rail experts from across the Rail Industry. RISSB wishes to acknowledge the positive contribution of all subject matter experts and development group representatives who participated in the development of this product.

The RISSB Development Group for this Code of Practice consisted of representatives from the following organizations:

Queensland RailSydney TrainsAurizonQueensland University of TechnologyARTCTransdev NZQUBE LogisticsMetro Trains MelbournePacific NationalPTA WAArcadisNSW TrainlinkRail, Tram, and Bus UnionDept. of Transport VictoriaMembers of the public

Development of this Code of Practice was undertaken in accordance with RISSB's accredited processes. It was approved by the Development Group, endorsed by the Standing Committee, and approved for publication by the RISSB Board.

I commend this Code of Practice to the Australasian rail industry as it represents industry good practice and has been developed through a rigorous process.

Deb Spring

Chief Executive Officer

Rail Industry Safety and Standards Board

Notice to users

This RISSB product has been developed using input from rail experts from across the rail industry and represents good practice for the industry. The reliance upon or manner of use of this RISSB product is the sole responsibility of the user, who is to assess whether it meets their organization's operational environment and risk profile.

Keeping Codes of Practice up to date

To maintain their currency, Codes of Practice developed by RISSB are periodically reviewed, and new editions published when required. Between editions, amendments can be issued.

It is important that readers assure themselves that they are using a current RISSB Code of Practice. Information about RISSB Codes of Practice, including amendments, can be found by visiting www.rissb.com.au.

RISSB welcomes suggestions for improvements and asks readers to notify us immediately of any apparent inaccuracies or ambiguities, please contact us via email at info@rissb.com.au or write to Rail Industry Safety and Standards Board PO Box 518, Spring Hill, QLD 4004, Australia.

RISSB product can be found at: http://www.rissb.com.au/products/.

RISSB ABN 58 105 001 465 Page 1



Document control

Document title	Version	Date
Rail Traffic Horn Use - Code of Practice	1.0	27 April 2022

Document history

Publication version	Date	Reason for and extent of changes	
1.0	27 April 2022	First published	

Approval

Name	Date
Rail Industry Safety and Standards Board	27 April 2022

Copyright

© RISSB

All rights are reserved. No part of this work can be reproduced or copied in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, without the written permission of RISSB, unless otherwise permitted under the Copyright Act 1968.

RISSB ABN 58 105 001 465 Page 2



Contents

1	Introduction	2
1.1	Purpose	2
1.2	Scope	2
1.3	Code of Practice	3
1.4	Defined terms and abbreviations	3
1.5	References	5
2	Rail traffic horns	6
2.1	General	6
2.2	Categorization of rail traffic horn use	6
2.3	Factors influencing rail traffic horn use	
2.4	Legislative context	
2.5	Policies	
2.6	Types of rail traffic horn	8
2.7	Rail traffic horn signals	9
3	Rail traffic horn use	9
3.1	Sounding the rail traffic horn	
3.2	Rail traffic horn intensity	
3.3	Rail traffic horn use in an emergency	
3.4	Location and activities for rail traffic horn use	
3.5	Rail traffic horn used for communications	
4	Whistle boards	
4.1	Location of whistle boards	12
4.2	Rail traffic horn use restrictions	
5	Level crossings.	
5.1	General	
5.1	Excessive use	
5.2	Active level crossings	
5.4	Crossings located close together	
5.5	Stopping point after the whistle board	. 14
5.6	Level crossing removal	
5.7	Interaction at level crossings	
	Network rules	
6.1	General	
6.2	Training and compliance	
6.4		
	•	
7	Managing the risk	
7.1	General	. 17
7.0		
7.2	Understanding the risks	. 17
7.2 7.3 7.4		. 17



8 Noise management	20
8.1 General	20
8.2 Rail traffic horn noise impact	20
8.3 Minimizing the impact of rail traffic horn noise	20
Appendix Contents	
Appendix A Rail transport operator responsibilities	21
Appendix B Influences involved in rail traffic horn use	22
Appendix C Alternative systems and methods	
Appendix D National and international approaches	25
Tables	
Table 1: Railway noise guidelines	8
Table 2: Rail traffic horn signals	9
Table 3 Rail traffic horn use	11
Table 4: Level crossing approach	15
Table 5: Rail traffic horn controls the risk	18
Table 6: Rail traffic horn is the source of the risk	18
Table 7: Assessment methods	19
Table A1: Activities and responsibilities	21
Table B1: Influences involved in rail traffic horn use	22
Table C1: Potential alternatives to minimize rail traffic horn use	23
Table D1: National and international approaches	25



Introduction 1

1.1 **Purpose**

This Code of Practice (Code) details the recommendations and requirements for using rail traffic horns to support the safe operation of rail traffic on the Australian rail network.

The recommendations and requirements aim to:

- a) standardize the use of rail traffic horns;
- b) minimize the use of rail traffic horns where opportunity exists;
- c) minimize the noise impact of rail traffic horns on the community where opportunity exists.

1.2 Scope

The scope of this Code covers the use of rail traffic horns on the Australian rail network for specific actions to mitigate safety risk, including guidance on:

- a) managing rail traffic horn use;
- b) managing rail traffic horn noise;
- c) network rules for rail traffic horns use;
- d) managing the interaction with rail traffic horns;
- e) opportunities to identify alternative technologies and methods to minimize rail traffic horn use.

The practices in this Code apply to rail transport operators (RTO), including contractors and third parties.

Out of Scope

This Code does not cover:

- a) automated railway operations where the use of the rail traffic horn is applicable;
- b) the design requirements for rail traffic horns¹;
- road rail vehicles that operate on the railway network;
- rail vehicles used on light rail, cane railway and monorail networks².

RISSB ABN 58 105 001 465 Page 2

Rail Traffic Horn Use

¹ For details on the design of the train horn, refer to AS 7532 Railway Rolling Stock - Audible Warning Devices.

² Items from this Code may be applied to such systems as deemed appropriate by the relevant organizations.