

Glossary of Railway Terms for 7¼ inch Railways

A

Absolute block	A signalling system that allows only one train to be in a block section at the same time. The block indicator is used to indicate whether the line between adjacent signal boxes is clear or occupied.
Adjacent line	A line or siding next to the line you are on.
Affect the normal passage of trains	Any activity or event that allows train working to continue but causes the inability to call at a location or introduction of degraded-mode operations such as passing signals at danger, hand-signalling, manual route setting or single line working arrangements.
Affect the safety of the line	Any activity or event that may, during its course, render the track, the formation or a structure unsafe for the passage of trains, or unsafe for the passage of trains at normal speed.
Affect the safety of train working	Any activity or event that may, during its course, render a movement control or interlocking system unusable for the signalling of trains.
Air Braked	A braking system using Air pressure to keep the brakes off.
Aspect	The indication of a signal that the driver sees.
Automatic level crossing	A crossing that is operated by the passage of train.
Automatic Signal	A signal operated by the passage of trains.
Axle counter or Treadle	A method of detecting the presence of a train or vehicle on a line. Track-mounted equipment, at each end of a portion of line, counts the number of axles passing over. This is evaluated to identify when a portion of line is occupied or clear.

B

Banner Repeater	A device that informs a driver the condition of the signal it apply to applies to.
Barrow crossing	A crossing (often at the end of a platform) for railway personnel to use. Some barrow crossings have white-light indicators which, when lit, indicate to the user that it is safe to cross.
Bi-directional line	A line on which the signalling allows trains to run in both directions.
Block section	The section of the line between the section signal of one signal box and the home signal of the next signal box ahead.
Board	Slang name for a semaphore signal.
Bogie	A independent item for rolling stock that carries the wheels, brake and suspension for a vehicle. Can carry the motors on locomotives.
Brake van	Any vehicle with a brake compartment.
Braking distance	The distance a train needs in which to stop or reduce speed, from travelling at a given speed.

C

Cant	See Superelevation
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Catch points	Points designed to derail vehicles running back on a gradient in the wrong direction. These points may be unworked if trains normally pass over them in one direction only.
Calling on Signal	See Subsidiary Signal. Normally used to allow a train into a station where there is another train in the platform.
Check Rail	A double rail section of track, sometimes found in train yards and on bridges to prevent derailments. Also found on tight radius curves and points and crossings.
Competent person	A person who is passed as being qualified and has the required knowledge and skills to carry out a particular rule, instruction or procedure.
Controlled crossing	A crossing that is controlled at or from near its location
Controlled evacuation	The evacuation of passengers from a train to a safe place away from the railway
Coupled in multiple	Two or more traction units coupled together to allow operation by one driver.
Coupled in tandem	Two or more traction unit is separately controlled by its own driver, with control of the automatic brake by one driver.
Crossover (also known as Junction or points)	A track arrangement that allows trains to switch from one parallel track to another.

D

Defective on-train equipment	On-train equipment that: • is not performing its intended safety function, either fully or partly • is isolated • is missing.
Derailer	A device at an exit from a siding or bay platform that derails an unauthorized movement, so protecting the adjacent line.
Detection (Points)	An electrical or mechanical indication that points are set in the correct position.
Detection (fault)	A process of finding a fault in a system. Normally Signal system related.
Distance Signal	A signal that can not display a Stop aspect. Can be a colour light or semaphore.
Driver only (or DO) train	A train that is worked only by a driver and does not have a guard.
Driving Truck	A Vehicle behind the locomotive for the Driver to operate Locomotive from if no room on Locomotive.

F

Facing point lock (FPL)	Equipment that physically locks facing points so that they cannot move.
Facing points	Points where two routes diverge.
Feathers	Slang name for route indicators also can be called Luner Lights.
Formation	Another name for the permanent way, including bridges and crossings

G

Goods line	A line that has not been signalled to the standard required for running passenger trains.
Ground frame	A control point containing levers or switches to allow points in running lines and sidings, and any associated signals, to be operated locally. This local operation is only possible when the signaller at the controlling signal box gives a release.

H

Hand points	Points that are worked manually by lever independent of any other signalling controls.
Head-shunt (other names Shunt Neck. Or Shunt Spur)	A short length of track provided to release locomotives at terminals or to allow shunting to take place clear of running lines.
Home signal	The first stop signal on the approach to a signal box using the absolute block system of signalling.

I

In service	A train is in service from the time it starts its journey until the time it completes its journey. A vehicle is in service when it forms part of a train which is in service.
Interlocking	A general term applied to equipment that controls setting and releasing signals and points to prevent an unsafe condition of the signalling system arising during the passage of trains.
Intermediate block home signal	A stop signal that controls the exit from an intermediate block section. (Although an intermediate block home signal controls the entrance to an absolute block section, it is referred to as the intermediate block home signal).
Intermediate block section	The line between the section signal and the intermediate block home signal worked by the same signal box in the same direction of travel.

J

Junction signal	A signal that controls more than one running route and can display an indication of route.
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L

Level crossing	Any manned, automatic, controlled or open crossing.
Lever	Includes a switch, button or workstation control.
Light Locomotive	Any Locomotive, or multiple of locomotives running without a train, Can include Driving Trucks
Line of Sight	When more than one train is running with no signals. Driver must run at a speed, leaving a suitable distance between them and the train in front so to be able to stop safely.

Locomotive	Power unit to haul a train
Loop	A second parallel track to allow faster trains to overtake slower ones.
Loose Coupled	A train of stock that has no brake controlled by the train crew or is not in use.

M

Main Aspect (signal)	The colour shown on the signal or the position of the signal arm
Maintenance depot	A location defined with the facilities to repair or maintain items of rolling stock.
Manned level crossing	A level crossing that is operated locally by a signaller or crossing keeper.
Mechanical points	Points that are mechanically operated without any other form of power operation.

N

No-block line	A line on which the signaller does not monitor the condition of the block section.
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O

One-train working or One Engine in Steam	Method of operating on a single line, with or without a train staff, where only one train at a time is permitted.
Open level crossing	An unmanned level crossing that has no barriers, gates or road traffic signals. It has a 'Give Way' sign on each road approach.
Operations Manager	Person in-charge of the running the railway.
Out of service	A vehicle is out of service when it forms part of a train and it cannot be used, or when it has been detached from a train at a depot, siding, platform line or other authorised place.
Overlap	The distance beyond a stop signal up to which the line must be clear before the previous signal can show a proceed aspect.

P

Passenger service	A train that is in service carrying passengers.
Permissible speed	The maximum permitted speed of the line.
Permanent Way or P-Way	The track, ballast, sleepers and rail. All things required to run trains.
Permanent Way Gang	Group of people who maintain or build the Permanent Way
Pilot Engine	Locomotive normally attached to the front of the train locomotive
Pilotman	A person who has been appointed to manage the passage of trains over a single line during a failure of equipment, during repairs or due to an obstruction.

Power-operated points	Points that are operated by means other than mechanically.
Protection	Ways of making sure that a line is protected. This includes keeping signals at danger, or showing a hand danger signal.
Pump Trolley (or Hand pump trolley)	A small person powered vehicle.

R

Reminder appliance	A device or control used to remind the signaller that a particular lever, button or switch must not be operated, or used only under certain conditions.
Repeater (in a signal box)	A dial or indicator in a manual signal box that shows the position of a signal arm or whether the signal lamp is lit.
Right-side failure	A failure that does not reduce the protection given by signalling equipment.
Rolling Stock	Any Item with railway wheels that can run on a railway.
Running line	A passenger line or non-passenger line used for running of trains.
Run through(of points)	An incident where a movement runs through a trailing set of points that are not set in the correct position for the movement.

S

Section signal	A stop signal that controls the entrance to a block section or intermediate block section ahead.
Semi-automatic signal	A signal normally operated by the passage of trains, but can also be controlled from the signal box or from a ground frame.
Shunter	1. A locomotive used for assembling trains and moving rolling stock about. 2. A person involved in moving rolling stock about, including coupling and uncoupling.
Shunting movement	Any movement of a train or vehicle other than a train passing normally along a running line.
Shunting signal	A signal that is provided for shunting purposes only.
Siding	A line on which vehicles are marshalled, stabled, loaded, unloaded or serviced clear of a running line.
Single line	One line is available for movements in both directions.
SPAD	Stop signal passed at danger (red) without authority
Station	Terminal, depot, yard or halt.
Station limits	The line between the home signal and the section signal worked by the same signal box and in the same direction of travel. This does not apply on a track circuit block line.
Station Master	A person in-charge of Station operation or the full railway
Stop signal	A signal that can show a stop aspect or indication.
Subsidiary signal	A signal used for controlling shunting movements and movements onto occupied tracks. It can be below the main signal with which it is associated.
Superelevation	Also known as Cant. The raising of the outer rail on a curve to help trains navigate the curve, smoothly and safely.

Swinger	A rail vehicle that has no brakes that can be controlled by the driver. Vehicle may have a handbrake.
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T

Tail lamp	A red light on the back of a train to indicate the train is complete. Can be an illuminated built-in red light or blind.
Theatre Indicator	A box that shows a number or letter, that light up when the associated signal is cleared to show route
Token	Any single line token, staff or tablet.
Track circuit	A method of detecting the presence of a train or vehicle on a line. An electrical device, using the rails as an electrical circuit, detects the absence of a train or vehicle.
Track circuit block	A method of signalling trains in a section of line using track circuits or other means of automatic train detection and without using block instruments.
Track circuit operating clip	A device which, in an emergency can be placed on top of each running rail to operate the track circuit and protect an obstruction.
Traction unit	Locomotive, multiple unit, self-propelled rail vehicle or road-rail vehicle operating in rail mode.
Trailing points	Points where two routes converge.
Traverser	A sliding platform used to move stock sideways normally used when there is little room for points or restricted access.
Train	Locomotive hauling stock and self-propelled vehicle e.g. tram.
Traincrew	Driver and guard.
Train Engine	Locomotive coupled to the train.
Trap points	Facing points at an exit from a siding or converging route that derail an unauthorised movement, so protecting the adjacent line.
Treadle	Device used to indicate the location of a train when it runs over it. Also can be used to activate crossing or signals.
Turntable	A device for turning rolling stock, normally locomotives.

U

Unworked points	Points that are not operated from a signal box or ground frame.
Unbraked	Rolling stock that has no brake system fitted.

V

Vac Braked	A braking system that uses Vacuum as a means to operate.
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W

Worked points	Points that are operated from a signal box or ground frame.
Wrong-side failure	A failure that reduces or removes the protection given by signalling equipment.