



7¼ Inch Gauge Society Limited

Railway Environment Awareness Assessment

Version 0.1 Draft
August 2026
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7¼" Gauge Society Limited

Proficiency Scheme

Candidates Progress Booklet for Railway Environment Awareness

Name _____

Assessors Name:- _____

Candidates Name:- _____

Membership Number:- _____

Railway Environment Awareness Assessment

This Assessment forms part of the 7¼" Society Proficiency Scheme, to test practical and theoretical knowledge and understanding of the environment in which the candidate will be working and volunteering. Unlike the equipment-specific modules, this module is not confined to the trackside: it covers the whole operating site, including the running line, public and passenger areas, the car park and site access, and the loco shed and workshop. Duty of care and safety awareness are included throughout rather than as a separate section. The assessment can be completed over a number of operating days and in any order.

Prior to assessment, please confirm the candidate has read the relevant Society and club/railway documentation (including local rules, risk assessments and operating instructions) and has had the opportunity to become familiar with the site, so they are confident to take the assessment. The reading of the supplementary document titled "Railway Environment Awareness Manual" provided by the 7 ¼" Gauge Society is also recommended.

Observation

The activities listed in the sections below can be completed in any order and multiple activities may be observed, or discussed, at the same time. Several items are as much about the candidate's understanding as an observable action – these may be assessed by discussion, scenario or questioning rather than direct observation, and should be recorded as such in the Comments column.

Note:- This module is intentionally proportionate. It is not intended to turn every volunteer into a health and safety professional, nor to apply construction-site standards to a running day – it is intended to ensure candidates understand the hazards and their duty of care in the environment of a miniature railway attraction, and know where to find further information or who to ask.

Section 1: General Site Awareness and Duty of Care

Activity	Seen Y / N (✓ / X)	Comments
a) Duty of Care – can the candidate explain: - what "duty of care" means in practical terms, to themselves, to fellow volunteers/members, and to visitors and members of the public - that this duty applies across the whole site, not just when driving or operating equipment - the general duties on employers/societies and employees/volunteers under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, including the duty to protect the public from work activities		
b) Site Familiarisation – did the candidate: - locate the site accident/incident book and know how to make an entry - locate the first aid point(s)/first aider contact, and fire points/extinguishers nearest to their usual work area - identify the site's emergency stop arrangements and how to summon help in an emergency - identify muster/assembly point(s) in the event of an evacuation - identify the sites fire emergency plan and site fire extinguishers		
c) Hazard and Near-Miss Reporting – can the candidate explain: - how to recognise a hazard and the difference between a hazard, a near miss and an incident - who hazards, defects and near misses should be reported to, and how - that they should not attempt to fix or ignore a hazard beyond their competence, and should make it safe (e.g. cordon off) where they reasonably can		
d) PPE and Signage – did the candidate: - identify the PPE appropriate to different tasks/areas on site and where it is kept - recognise common site safety signage (mandatory, warning, prohibition) and explain what is expected of them at each - show awareness that orange high-visibility clothing is the recognised convention for anyone working on or near the running line (as used on the mainline railway under RSSB standard RIS-3279-TOM), and where the Society/railway expects this to be worn		

Section 2: The Trackside Environment

Activity	Seen Y / N (✓ / X)	Comments
a) Working and Moving Trackside – did the candidate: - identify safe places of refuge/standing clear of the loading gauge when a train is approaching or passing - explain the safe way to cross the running line – only at designated/authorised points, stop-look-listen, and never in front of an approaching movement - recognise trackside hazards such as uneven ground, vegetation, low structures, tunnels/bridges and the cess - explain the effect of weather on the trackside environment (wet or greasy rail, leaf-fall, ice, standing water) and how this changes the risk		
b) Signage and Warnings – can the candidate explain the meaning of: - speed boards, whistle boards and stop boards - any local warning boards specific to the railway (e.g. "sound horn", "pedestrians crossing")		
c) Members of the Public on or near the Line – can the candidate explain: - the correct action if a member of the public or an animal strays onto the running line or trespasses on the trackside - who to inform and how, and the priority of stopping trains/movements safely over continuing to operate		

Section 3: Public Areas and Passenger Interaction

Activity	Seen Y / N (✓ / X)	Comments
a) Duty of Care to Visitors – can the candidate explain: - in general terms, that occupiers of premises owe a duty of care to visitors under occupiers' liability law, and what this means in practice for a running day - that this duty is owed even to visitors who are not paying passengers (e.g. those in the car park or public viewing areas)		
b) Platforms and Boarding – did the candidate identify: - hazards at boarding/alighting points (platform gaps and edges, moving stock, restricted clearances) - how to assist vulnerable visitors safely – for example children, wheelchair or mobility-scooter users, and elderly passengers		

Activity	Seen Y / N (✓ / X)	Comments
safe queue and crowd management during busy periods		
c) Incident Involving a Member of the Public – can the candidate explain: - the reporting procedure if a visitor is injured or involved in an incident, including recording details and witness information - who takes charge of an incident involving the public, and the candidate's own role in supporting them		

Section 4: Level Crossings, the Public Highway and the ORR

Activity	Seen Y / N (✓ / X)	Comments
a) Regulatory Context – can the candidate explain: <i>(Assessor: this is a knowledge point – assess by discussion/questioning rather than observation.)</i> - that most 7¼" gauge miniature railways operate largely outside the day-to-day regulatory reach of the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), which primarily regulates the mainline railway, London Underground, trams, light rail and heritage railways - that the ORR nonetheless becomes directly involved wherever a miniature railway crosses a public road or public right of way – such crossings fall under the Level Crossings Act 1983, for which the ORR is the enforcing authority, and any new or altered crossing may require a level crossing order - that this is a specific, limited point of overlap rather than general ORR oversight of the railway, and that day-to-day safety on the rest of the line remains governed by the Society's/railway's own rules and risk assessments		
b) Operating a Public Road/Path Crossing – did the candidate demonstrate or explain: - the correct safe sequence for a road/footpath crossing – stop, check the crossing is clear, use any barriers/warning devices provided, and only proceed when safe - the extra caution required because members of the public using the crossing may not be familiar with miniature trains or their stopping distances - what to do, and who to report to, if a crossing gate, barrier or warning device is found to be faulty or damaged		

Section 5: Car Park and Site Access

Activity	Seen Y / N (✓ / X)	Comments
a) Vehicle and Pedestrian Safety – did the candidate identify: - how pedestrians and visitor vehicles are kept apart in the car park, and any one-way or drop-off arrangements - the safe way to direct or marshal a visitor's vehicle, if this forms part of their role - hazards around loading/unloading, including trailers, ramps and disabled access		
b) Emergency Arrangements from the Car Park – did the candidate identify: - the route to the nearest accident book/first aid point and muster point from the car park area - who to contact if an incident occurs in the car park or on site access roads		

Section 6: The Loco Shed and Workshop Environment

Activity	Seen Y / N (✓ / X)	Comments
a) Workshop Hazards – did the candidate identify: - the main hazards found in a typical shed/workshop – moving machinery, lifting equipment, hand and power tools, fuels, oils, paints and cleaning chemicals, and batteries - the particular hazards of batteries on charge (heat, gassing/hydrogen and short-circuit risk) and how these are managed - the correct PPE for shed/workshop tasks and where it is kept		
b) Safe Systems of Work – can the candidate explain: - the basic principle of COSHH – that hazardous substances (oils, paints, solvents, battery acid) should be identified, stored and used according to their safety data/label instructions - safe manual handling principles for lifting and carrying (e.g. batteries, components), including asking for assistance where needed - good housekeeping expectations – keeping gangways clear, storing tools correctly, cleaning up spills promptly		
c) Fire and Emergency – did the candidate identify: - the fire extinguishers provided in the shed/workshop, their types, and what each is (and is not) suitable for - the fire exits/escape routes and where to muster		

Section 7: Contractors, Construction Work and CDM Awareness

Activity	Seen Y / N (✓ / X)	Comments
a) General Awareness – can the candidate explain: <i>(Assessor: this is a knowledge point – assess by discussion. Depth of questioning can be adjusted to the candidate's role.)</i> - that construction-type work on the railway (e.g. track renewals, extensions, new buildings or platform works) may fall under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015), and that the Society/railway takes a proportionate approach appropriate to an attraction site rather than a large construction project - in general terms, the roles involved in CDM (client, principal designer, principal contractor) – candidates are not expected to hold these roles themselves, only to understand that such duties exist for larger works		
b) Working Alongside Contractors/Construction Activity – did the candidate explain: - how to recognise that construction or engineering work is taking place (signage, barriers, exclusion zones) - the correct behaviour around such work – keeping clear, not entering marked exclusion areas, following any temporary instructions - who to report to if they see unsafe practice by a contractor, or an unmarked/unguarded hazard left by construction work		

Section 8: Wider Regulatory and Standards Framework

Activity	Seen Y / N (✓ / X)	Comments
a) Key Legislation – can the candidate give a general (not detailed legal) explanation of: - the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the general duty to look after themselves and others - the Occupiers' Liability Acts, in relation to the duty owed to visitors - the Level Crossings Act 1983 and the ORR's role where the line crosses a public road, as covered in Section 4		
b) Industry Good Practice – can the candidate explain: that while most Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) Railway Group Standards and Rail Industry Standards (RIS) are written for the mainline railway and are not mandatory for 7¼" gauge miniature railways, many are used as a useful source of good practice – for example RIS-3279-TOM on high-visibility clothing		

Activity	Seen Y / N (✓ / X)	Comments
that the Society's own rule book, and the host railway's local rules and risk assessments, are the primary documents governing day-to-day safe operation, and always take precedence for that site		

Assessor Questions

In the box below record any additional questions used to cover any missing criteria above. Continue on a separate sheet if required.

Question	Answer

Additional Evidence

The assessor is to record any additional evidence seen before, during or after the assessment that supports the above criteria. This can include, and is not limited to, photos, a statement from a club member, or the candidate's written statement.

The assessor may set scenarios for the candidate to answer, and these should be included below.