The Railway Systems Code of Practice

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1. Introduction

This section is relevant if you are interested in the Code of Practice for the Management and Development of Railway Code Systems ("the systems code") and the Catalogue of Railway Code Systems ("the catalogue").

2. Systems Code

The systems code is a charter for the effective management of Network Rail and other industry organisations owned and shared systems. It defines the responsibilities of system owners and users of systems and helps to ensure that railway information systems continue to support the safe and effective operation of the railway network in Britain.

The systems code sets out arrangements for obtaining access to, using, managing and developing certain computer systems. In doing so, it aims to:

a) make clear the responsibilities that exist between systems owners and users of data and information systems in the Railway Industry

b) lay upon all systems owners and their users the disciplines of good practice in managing their relationships in the systems area

c) provide for wide access to data whilst protecting confidentiality and encourage systems owners and users to improve the quality of data used in the systems

d) provide to new owners and new entrants clear guidance on the computer systems that are necessary or expedient in order to operate trains over Network Rail's infrastructure, and show them a practical way of working that supports the development and change of systems to the general advantage of the Railway Industry

e) encourage systems owners to garner support for changes in functionality and operational cost so that the changes do not become obstacles to progress or good commercial relationships

f) allow users to be confident that changes in function and cost will not be forced upon them without consultation or voting backed by an appeal process

g) generally protect and balance the rights of systems owners and users in relation to systems

h) provide for fair, competitive and non-discriminatory behaviour in the systems area

i) provide principles to be applied by systems owners other than Network Rail.

In accordance with the requirements of the systems code, Network Rail will, annually, review the computer systems that are relevant to the railway industry and following the review, will publish its proposals for:

a) designating a system as a Railway Code System

b) designating a Railway Code System as no longer being a Railway Code System (not withstanding that it may remain in use as a system but not as a shared system)

c) changing the designation of a system between the categories of what is known as a

d) 'Necessary System' and a 'Expedient System'

e) withdrawing from use, or ceasing to support, a Railway Code System.

Network Rail will consult on all proposals with the Railway Code Systems Group who are defined as all system owners and contracted users of railway code systems. Network Rail will take account of any comments/suggestions it receives.

It should be noted that in order to become a party to the systems code a user must either have a track access contract with Network Rail or have a genuine railway need to access and use Railway Code Systems.

A copy of the systems code can be found here

3. The Catalogue

The Catalogue of Railway Code Systems is the primary source of information about the Railway Code Systems and supports the operation, management and development of the systems code.

Network Rail maintains the catalogue and details for each railway code system:

a)   its title

b)   the name of the systems owner

c)   whether it is a necessary system or an expedient system

d)   its main functions and features

e)   its relevance to the railway industry

f)   whether it has material safety implications

g)   a summary of current systems release proposals and release development plans relating to it

h)   an indication of relevant contract provisions

i)   categories of data to be exchanged using the railway code system

j)   a list of Double Dot Releases, identified by system, number and date only.

4. Who do I contact for more information?

In order to become a party to the Systems Code or to find out more information, please contact:

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