

GENERAL INFORMATION

Title : The railway infrastructure maintainers are becoming the organisers of the industrial safety necessary for their work.

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Field addressed by this paper

The “referential”, i.e. the rules and standards for the safety of railway infrastructure maintenance operations that are incompatible with (or hinder) rail traffic.

The 3 safety principles

Principle No. 1 : No operation on the RFN infrastructure that is incompatible with the running of trains (or hinders traffic) can begin without prior agreement by the department in charge of traffic .

Principle No. 2 : No operation on the RFN infrastructure that is incompatible with the running of trains (or hinders traffic) can begin before the maintenance department has taken, or ascertained that others have taken, steps to prevent railway vehicles from being present on or coming into the geographical zone in which that operation is to take place.

Principle No. 3 : The presence or the penetration of a vehicle in the geographical zone that must be cleared for an operation on the RFN infrastructure incompatible with (or hindering) the running of trains can be authorised only by the maintenance department in charge of that operation.

Why change the rules ?

SNCF has suffered railway accidents and analysis of the experience revealed that others could have occurred.

Moreover, the successive corrective statements of the “referential” reinforced complexity of the corresponding rules.

A analysis established that it was the reference that needed to be modified.

Safety is practiced by supervisors and operators as a constraining obligation to the detriment of production.

Changes

What will not change :

- Application of Principles No. 1 and No. 3 above.

What will change fundamentally :

- The application of Principle No. 2 above.

Today, only the department in charge of operations is capable of taking the necessary *ad hoc* measures to "protect any trains that might run" .

Tomorrow, a wider set of measures will be afforded in the new system by combining those possible within the maintenance department and/or those possible within the operating department.

Changes (following)

We are changing over from

a culture represented by the notions of :

- application solely of the regulatory response to a problem,
- deviations or frequent exemptions from the rules,

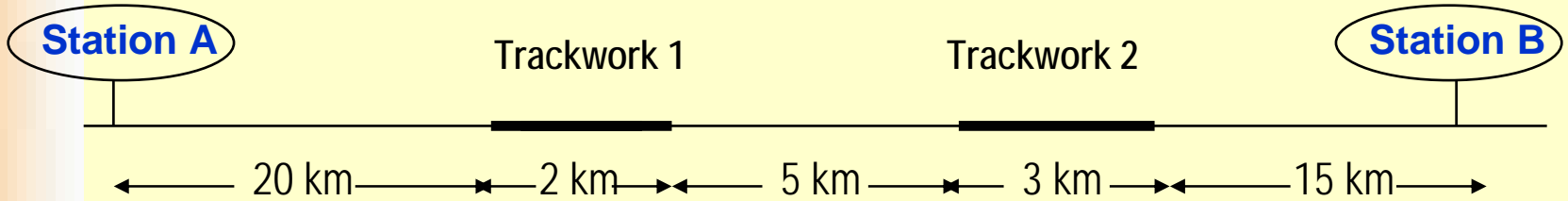
to a culture founded on the notions of :

- achieving objectives and respecting requirements,
- calculating the possible responses to a given problem,
- assuming responsibility for choices and explaining them,
- thoughtfully optimising costs and benefits.

Results obtained

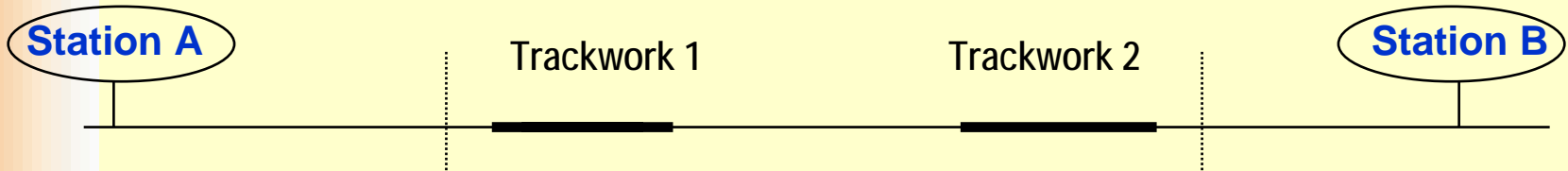
- Managers and supervisors will be able to refocus on their duties of safety system designer.
- Current practice will come back as one solution among many.
- The new system will allow the safety operators, including the supervisory staff, to understand the « why » of such or such a procedure.
- The cost of maintenance will be cut back .

Example : TODAY



45 km are needed to work on 5 km.
Trackwork protection is realized through Station A and Station B.

Same example : TOMORROW



10 km are needed to work on 5 km.
Trackwork protection is realized for each trackwork by each of the trackwork chiefs.

How do we get there ?

What has been done:

- Benchmarking in 4 neighbouring countries (Belgium, Switzerland, Italy and Germany).
- System construction *in camera* by experts with field experience.
- Testing the « functional requirements » together with about 1000 operational managers in all the SNCF Regions.
- Two groups « critiques » have been set up :
 - one made up of personnel representatives,
 - one made up of 12 safety « specialists » on the field that will be the future « users » of the « referential ».
- Setting up national and regional project structures allowing progressive and satisfactory implementation.
- Ministerial approval process of source texts.

Conclusion

At SNCF, no real progress on the safety and productivity of track work is possible as long as the texts, which are the "image in application" of the current system, remain in force.

It is crucial for the stakes and risks of this project to be assessed exactly. What is involved is a true and deep change of system.

The direct impact of the project on immediate safety and the number of players concerned make it a sensitive one but also essential for the "delegate infrastructure manager", SNCF : safety and productivity go hand in hand.