Guidance Note – Planning for Special Events

Synopsis

This Guidance Note provides advice on operational, safety and contingency factors to take into consideration when planning for special events.

Applicability

This Guidance Note has been prepared for passenger train operating companies. However, its content may also be of use or interest to others.

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Part 1 About this document

1.1 Responsibilities

1.1.1 Copies of this Guidance Note should be distributed by RDG members to persons within their respective organisations for whom its content is relevant.

1.2 Explanatory note

1.2.1 RDG produces RDG Guidance Notes for the information of its members. RDG is not a regulatory body and compliance with RDG Guidance Notes is not mandatory.

1.2.2 RDG Guidance Notes are intended to reflect good practice. RDG members are recommended to evaluate the guidance against their own arrangements in a structured and systematic way. Some or all parts of the guidance may not be appropriate to their operations. It is recommended that this process of evaluation and any subsequent decision to adopt (or not to adopt) elements of the guidance should be documented.

1.3 Guidance Note status

1.3.1 This document is not intended to create legally binding obligations between railway duty holders and should be binding in honour only.

1.4 Supply

1.4.1 Copies of this Guidance Note may be obtained from the RDG members’ web site.
Part 2 Purpose and scope

2.1 Purpose

2.1.1 The purpose of this guidance note is to provide a list of factors to take into consideration, along with suggestions as to how each may be addressed, when planning for special events that are likely to have an impact on a railway undertaking’s business. It focuses primarily on operational and safety aspects and associated contingency arrangements – it does not seek to address purely commercial considerations such as ticketing or revenue protection arrangements. Its content reflects examples of good practice identified through a review of individual TOC arrangements.

2.2 Scope

2.2.1 This guide is produced for the benefit of all member organisations of the RDG Train Operators Operations Scheme.

Part 3 Introduction

3.1 Background

3.1.1 Major special events – such as sporting fixtures, music festivals and royal occasions – result in an increase in the number of people using the rail network.

3.1.2 This is not a new phenomenon, but the growth in the number of customers in recent years means that this is imposed on a much higher level of base demand than was previously the case. Special events impose even greater pressure on trains and stations which are already routinely operating at close to maximum capacity with associated risks, for example those at the Platform Train Interface, made all the more acute.

3.1.3 It follows that greater resources need to be dedicated to managing special events, both in the planning phase and on the day in order to ensure that these risks are appropriately identified, mitigated and managed.

Part 4 Early identification of events

4.1 General plans and processes

4.1.1 Many railway undertakings already manage major public events which occur on a regular basis and have established plans and processes for the review and revision of those plans.

4.1.2 Many railway undertakings have found it helpful to have an ‘event calendar’ onto which details of forthcoming events with the potential to have an impact on the train/station operations can be recorded. Each event may additionally be ‘categorised’ to indicate the assessed likely impact on operations from ‘business as usual’ to major event plan and significantly enhanced train service required. This categorisation may be further subdivided into impact on train planning, crowd management, station staffing, security, road traffic/parking managements on the station approach, etc.
4.2 Liaison with local authorities

4.2.1 Railway undertakings should endeavour to make sure local authorities are aware of their requirements and limitations with regards to the provision of train services for special events. The principles of this should be raised by railway undertakings at their respective Local Resilience Forums.

4.3 New and one off events

4.3.1 There are also occasions where a new or one off major event is taking place. In such cases railway undertakings need to be involved in initial consultation with event organisers in conjunction with other key stakeholders (such as the British Transport Police (BTP), Network Rail and other agencies) to understand the dynamics of the event and also the crowd profile. Understanding the crowd profile is essential when it comes to assessing potential risk.

4.3.2 The organisers of such events may not have had previous comparable experience on which to draw and hence may fail to anticipate the impact on the rail system. However it is highly probable that they will have had an early engagement with the local authority concerned and hence it is recommended that railway undertakings develop a good working relationship with local authority special event leads and encourage them to share such details as they have of future events at the earliest possible opportunity.

4.3.3 Some stakeholders may not be immediately obvious. For example, the annual Army v Navy rugby union fixture at Twickenham involves a Military Police presence in addition to the BTP and Metropolitan Police.

4.3.4 A timeline should be drawn up for planning and implementing the arrangements with key milestones identified. An example of such a timeline is provided as Appendix A, though it should be noted that this is indicative only and that timescales are necessarily relative rather than absolute as larger/more complex events will require planning to start sooner than those which are smaller/simpler.

Part 5 Assessing the risk

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Assessing the risks that could potentially arise from the holding of a major public event is a key driver for determining necessary control measures which will formulate the basis for the railway undertaking event plan, including the train service plans required to meet the anticipated demand for rail travel to and from the event.

5.2 Factors to consider

5.2.1 Major events may significantly increase the level of passenger flow both on trains and at stations. In both cases, specific control measures will be required to provide effective management and prevent the potential for overcrowding and congestion with the consequences of personal injury through crushing and slips, trips and falls, particularly at the Platform Train Interface.

5.2.2 In addition, the station infrastructure at the nearest railhead to an event may not be capable of dealing with significantly increased customer levels.
5.2.3 Increased passenger levels may well introduce other hazards and risks, for example the use of road transport between the railhead and event location, anti-social or unlawful behaviour, increased amounts of litter/other rubbish, potential damage to station infrastructure or trains, station security compromised and staff exposure to verbal/physical assault.

5.2.4 The potential impact of the weather in the day should also be considered – this applies not just to extreme weather (hot, cold, wind and rain) but also the potential for a shower or onset of more general rain to trigger a mass exodus rather than a more staggered drift away from open air events.

5.2.5 Consideration needs to be given to arrangements for the event overrunning (such as a football match going into extra time), being cancelled at short notice or ending early (as a result of such as a safety issue, terrorist alert or bad weather).

5.2.6 The risks associated with train service disruption, for example meaning customers may be late for the event, and the consequences of any incident that may happen at the event itself should also be taken into consideration – this highlights the importance of communication between the railway undertaking and event organiser.

5.2.7 Control measures may include delaying event start times for example, though it should be noted that no such flexibility is likely to be available for events that are being televised live.

5.2.8 The profile of those attending an event should be considered too and the possible implications of opposing people meeting en-route to or from two different events needs to be considered (e.g. rival football supporters).

5.2.9 It is recommended that the risks associated with the event are jointly assessed by the lead railway undertaking/Network Rail Route involved and all key stakeholders, including other railway undertakings likely to be significantly affected.

Part 6 Planning for the event

6.1 Overview

6.1.1 A risk assessment should be the basis of any major event plan.

6.1.2 All risk assessments should be carried out by a person who is suitably qualified and competent in risk assessment.

6.1.3 Planning should be undertaken in conjunction with the event organiser and the active involvement of all key stakeholders, who will include, as appropriate:

   i) The BTP

   ii) Respective Home Office police forces (and other police as appropriate, e.g. Military, etc.)

   iii) Local emergency services

   iv) Network Rail

   v) Other railway undertakings (including operators of charter trains)
vi) Local authorities

vii) Interfacing transport operators (e.g. bus companies, metro systems, etc.).

viii) Contracted crowd management companies

ix) Operators of associated venues involved

x) Organisations involved (i.e. event promoters, participating sports clubs etc.)

6.1.4 The planning process should determine accountabilities and responsibilities both within and outside of the railway boundary to ensure that stakeholder plans are aligned, seamless and where necessary, integrated.

6.1.5 Control measures to mitigate against the potential risks should be determined at this stage, with any specific actions allocated to the relevant stakeholder. It may be necessary for a railway undertaking to use contractors who specialise in event and crowd management.

6.1.6 It is essential to determine a robust command, control and communication structure that is easily understood by all parties and is agreed and documented within each stakeholder plan.

6.1.7 The suggested content of event plans is covered in the following sections 6.2 to 6.8, though their content should not be regarded as exclusive.

6.1.8 Every organisation responsible for event planning should subject itself to the scrutiny of the respective Safety Advisory Group. Failure to do so is leaving the organisation open to criticism and liability in the event that things go wrong.

6.1.9 The Safety Advisory Group can also advise and inform other relevant parties of the respective organisations’ limitations and requirements.

6.2 Command and control

6.2.1 Command and control arrangements should be set out, including the communications interface with key stakeholders necessary to ensure there is a clear channel of communication between the relevant railhead and the event site – this should include identifying any potential communication ‘blackspots’ and arrangements to overcome these.

6.2.2 There should be a robust command and control structure in place to manage the event. Generally accepted best practice is to establish a three tier command structure comprising Strategic, Tactical and Operational levels to implement and manage the arrangements.

6.2.3 It is usually, but not exclusively, the case that the relevant Control Office undertakes the role of Strategic Command – this may involve a specific ‘event team’ which will deal exclusively with managing the strategic requirements of the event in conjunction with the Tactical Command Team (see below) whilst the remaining personnel in the Control Office manage the rest of the network.
6.2.4 A manager from the lead railway undertaking should be appointed at Tactical level of command (sometimes identified as the ‘Event Manager’) to oversee the practical implementation of the planned arrangements – recognised best practice is to establish a Tactical Command Team at the relevant event railhead, primarily consisting of core rail business stakeholders such as the lead and supporting railway undertakings, Network Rail and the BTP. Local requirements will determine whether other key stakeholders (such as the local police force or event organiser representative) need to be part of that team.

6.2.5 The planning process should identify the roles required and the resources needed to fulfil them. There will also be a requirement to identify specific rail industry skill sets at the Operational level of command to ensure that both the planned arrangements can be effectively delivered and a timely response to incidents with the potential to seriously disrupt the plan arrangements can be deployed. This may include:

   i) Network Rail Rail Incident Officer (RIO)

   ii) Railway undertaking Train Operator Liaison Officer (TOLO)

   iii) Railway undertaking Station Incident Officer (SIO) – this role could be one and the same as the Tactical Commander

   iv) Railway undertaking fleet engineering staff (for dealing with train faults)

   v) Station announcer

   vi) Queue Manager(s)

   vii) Revenue Manager

   viii) Platform Manager(s)

6.2.6 These roles are representative and not inclusive; the planning arrangements will determine exact requirements. They will undertake their duties at the Operational level of command under the direction of the ‘Event Manager’ as Tactical Commander.

6.3 Staffing

6.3.1 Staffing plans should include details of where resources will be positioned and their roles and responsibilities, and the arrangements for the briefing of same.

6.4 Crowd management

6.4.1 Crowd management arrangements should include the supplying of relevant information to customers – this may include providing leaflets to those on the inbound journey which explain any requirements for queuing into the station on the return journey.

6.4.2 For major events it may be appropriate to employ Travel Demand Management (TDM), i.e. the application of strategies and policies to reduce travel demand or to redistribute this demand in space or in time. TDM has worked well for some events (e.g. the London Olympics in 2012) but less well for others.
6.5 Security

6.5.1 Security arrangements should be drawn and include specific references to any changes to DfT Land Transport Security requirements.

6.6 Operations

6.6.1 Operational arrangements should be identified, such as the train plan, station specific platform workings and requirements for managing the Platform Train Interface and train dispatch.

6.7 Customer care and assistance

6.7.1 Requirements for customer assistance (able bodied and mobility impaired) and including first aid provision should be set out, along with provision of toilet and catering facilities and train and station cleaning arrangements.

6.8 Emergencies and contingencies

6.8.1 Contingency arrangements should be drawn up to take account of any reasonably foreseeable emergency or degraded situations affecting the station, infrastructure or train operations. These should include train service and crowd management contingencies along with requirements for the evacuation of the premises and possibly failed trains.

6.8.2 It should be recognised that the specific nature of some emergencies may require the direct intervention of the BTP or local Police – the plan content should reflect this requirement and the arrangements for the transfer of command and control.

Part 7 Plan timelines

7.1 Content of timeline

7.1.1 The plan should also contain a timeline for implementation of the arrangements, as an example:

i) 6 weeks prior to event – commence media/public information campaign

ii) Not less than 10 days prior to the event – undertake table top exercise with all key stakeholders

iii) Produce a plan for the implementation of any actions arising from the table top exercise

iv) 1 week prior to event – carry out deep clean of station(s)

v) 2 days prior to event day - close station car park(s)

vi) 1 day prior to event day - erect crowd management barriers

vii) 1 day prior to event – install portable toilets in station car park(s)

viii) Early morning on day of event - erect informational signage

ix) Early morning on day of event – undertake final inspection of premises and arrangements
x) Early morning on day of event – brief early turn staff and volunteers
xi) 14.00 on day of event – brief late turn staff and volunteers
xii) End of day of event – hold ‘hot debrief’ with staff and volunteers
xiii) Within 5 days of event being held – undertake review of arrangements with event planning team

Note: The above list is intended to be neither prescriptive nor exhaustive.

**Part 8 Staff briefing packs**

**8.1 Content of briefing pack**

8.1.1 To support the event plan, a staff briefing pack should be compiled for imparting the arrangements to the managers and staff who will be in attendance. The briefing pack should contain as a minimum:

i) An overview of the event and plan arrangements

ii) The arrangements for command and control and lines of communication

iii) Any specific risks associated with the event, and how these will be managed

iv) Details of the crowd management plan and staff responsibilities

v) What to do in the event of an emergency

vi) Contingency arrangements for the event plan

vii) Information on train service provision, ‘where to change’ information, local interfacing details (such as local bus routes and pedestrian routes to the event site)

viii) Information on local facilities (such as toilets, ticket purchasing points, catering outlets, cash points, etc.)

Note: The above list is intended to be neither prescriptive nor exhaustive.

**Part 9 Informing the public**

**9.1 Media**

9.1.1 It is important that advice of the event is communicated prior to the event occurring. The media used for this purpose will be wide and varied and may include:

i) Company and National Rail websites

ii) Social media (such as Twitter)

iii) Customer Information Systems at stations and on trains
iv) Leaflets (given to passengers arriving at the station on their inbound journey)

v) Via the promoter, venue or other organisations involved with the event, e.g. football club, music promoter, etc.

9.2 Content

9.2.1 This will cover various aspects including:

i) Travel advice to customers intending to attend the event itself

ii) Travel advice to customers whose normal journey patterns may be affected by the event

iii) Changes to the access and egress arrangements at a station

iv) Advance warning of potential queuing times back into a station which intending customers should take into account for their journey plan

v) Advice of additional or altered train services

vi) Advice of any specific facilities being provided at stations for the event

Part 10 Exercising the arrangements

10.1 Testing the arrangements

10.1.1 The plan arrangements should be tested prior to the event.

10.1.2 The most common method is the ‘table-top’ style with participants from all interfacing agencies.

10.1.3 The exercise should identify any shortcomings or omissions with the planned arrangements, which should be recorded and amendments to the plan agreed. The plan should then be reviewed by stakeholders and ‘signed off’ for publication.

Part 11 Implementation of the plan

11.1 Principles

11.1.1 The arrangements to manage the event should be implemented in accordance with the agreed content, including the requirements for briefing all personnel.

11.1.2 It is important to ensure that the lines of communication for command and control are practically tested on the morning of the event to identify any potential issues.

11.1.3 Recognised good practice recommends that the ‘Event Manager’ undertakes periodic ‘time outs’ with key personnel to ensure arrangements remain fit for purpose, agreeing any adjustments that may be required. It is suggested that a ‘time out’ should always be held once the event has begun to ensure the arrangements for receiving return traffic are fully understood.
Part 12 Review

12.1 Principles

12.1.1 Recognised good practice recommends that a ‘hot’ debrief be undertaken with personnel immediately after the event plan arrangements have been officially ‘stood down’. This ensures that immediate thoughts and feedback are captured.

12.1.2 A formal review of the planned arrangements with all key stakeholders should be undertaken within a reasonable timescale of the event date to determine the effectiveness of those arrangements, including areas of concern and development, but also to allow best practice to be identified and built upon.

12.1.3 The review findings should be published in a written report, with any recommendations being actioned and tracked to conclusion, normally resulting in amendments to the documented arrangements.
APPENDIX

Event planning timeline

* Timescales are relative – planning for major and/or one-off events will need to be started sooner than for smaller and/or regular events