

GE/RT8000/HB4
Rule Book

Handbook 4

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Duties of a points operator and route-setting agent - moving and securing points by hand

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1 Definitions

Simple failure

Simple failures are limited to a failure or disconnection of:

- a single point end, or
- a single point end and a co-acting trap point, or
- both ends of a crossover.

If any more than this has failed or is disconnected, it must be dealt with as a complex failure.

Complex failure

A complex failure involves:

- more point ends than a simple failure
- any failure or disconnection affecting switch diamonds
- any failure or disconnection affecting swing-nose crossings.

A route-setting agent will be appointed to be in charge of a complex failure.

You can split a complex failure into two or more areas with a route-setting agent appointed to each area. Each route-setting agent must agree with the signaller which points they are responsible for.

2 Competence

The points operator must have with them a valid points operator certificate of competence issued by their employer.

The route-setting agent must have with them a valid route-setting-agent certificate of competence issued by their employer and must also be competent as a points operator.

3 Points operator dealing with a simple failure

3.1 Arriving on-site

On arrival, the points operator must:

- speak with the signaller and get instructions
- make sure trains have been stopped on the line involved
- find out if any other lines are still open
- reach a clear understanding with the signaller about what is to be done.

3.2 Before moving points

Before moving the points, the points operator must:

- check that it is not an obstruction that is stopping the points operating correctly
- make sure the power is cut off.

3.3 After moving points

Unless the signaller tells the points operator otherwise, the points must be secured.

When the points are correctly set, the points operator must move to a safe position and then tell the signaller.

The signaller will give the points operator instructions when it is necessary for the points to be unclipped and moved or for the power to be restored to the points when the fault is rectified.

When the points have been rectified, the points operator must check with the signaller that the points operate correctly.

3.4 Leaving secured points unattended

If the points are going to be left secured and unattended, the points operator must padlock each point clip before leaving.

4 Points operator dealing with a complex failure

The procedure for a complex failure is similar to a simple failure with the following differences.

- A route-setting agent will be appointed to be in charge.
- If a points operator is appointed, they will take instructions from the route-setting agent and not the signaller.
- The points operator must tell the route-setting agent, not the signaller, when the points are correctly set.
- The route-setting agent will give instructions to the points operator, not the signaller, if it is necessary for the points to be unclipped and moved.
- The route-setting agent will give instructions to the points operator for the power to be restored to the points when the fault is rectified.

5 Duties of a route-setting agent

The route-setting agent must be familiar with the track layout at the location concerned.

The route-setting agent must record the signaller's instructions on route-setting form.

If necessary, the route-setting agent will also carry out the duties of the points operator.

If a points operator is also appointed, they must take their instructions from the route-setting agent and not the signaller.

When the points have been correctly set, the points operator must report this to the route-setting agent.

The route-setting agent must walk through the route that has been set and check it has been done correctly and is set as shown on the route-setting form.

The route-setting agent must make sure everyone is clear of the line concerned before a train is allowed to pass over the portion of line.

The route-setting agent will give instructions when it is necessary for the points to be unclipped and moved, or for the power to be restored to the points when the fault is rectified.

Before leaving the site, the route-setting agent must check with the signaller that all of the affected points operate correctly.

If the route-setting agent is relieved, before leaving the site, the route-setting agent who is leaving must tell the signaller and any points operators who the new route-setting agent is.

6 Moving power-operated points by hand within a T3 possession

A route-setting agent is not needed when points within a possession need to be moved by hand.

Before moving points by hand in a possession, the points operator must first make sure the signaller agrees to the points being moved by hand.

The points operator must carry out the instructions given by the PICOP, ES or SWL to do with the position the points need to be moved to.

The points operator must tell the PICOP, ES or SWL when the points have been correctly set and are secured for any movement that is to be made over them.

When the PICOP, ES or SWL no longer needs the points to be moved, the points operator must restore the points to the original position.

The points operator must tell the signaller when the points have been returned to the original position and power has been restored.

7 How to secure points

7.1 Switch diamonds and swing-nose crossings

Use a clip and a scotch for movements over the points in all directions.

7.2 All other types of points

Use a clip and a scotch for movements over the points in the facing direction. You only need to use the scotch for movements over the points in the trailing direction.

7.3 How to apply a points clip and scotch

The clip must be placed under the rail as near to the tip of the tongue as possible. Always try to get it in the first or second bed.

The scotch must be placed between the open blade and the stock rail. It must be well below the top of the running rail.

8 Other requirements for points to be considered 'out of use'

If points are taken out of use, they must be secured in the following way.

On concrete sleepers

The points must be secured by approved devices that are padlocked.

On wooden sleepers

The closed blade must be secured with the clip, which must be padlocked, and a fishplate must be screwed to the sleeper by two screws so that the closed blade cannot move.

The open blade must be secured with a scotch.

Note: There are some approved devices that can be used instead of the above method. These are similar to those used on concrete sleepers.

9 Points run through

If the points operator or route setting-agent suspects that points have been run through, they must immediately tell the signaller and then carry out the signaller's instructions.

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