

Miniature Railway Voluntary Independent Inspections

Method Statement setting out the way the work will be carried out

Preface:

The purpose of these inspections is to provide a mutually beneficial advisory service in order to demonstrate to the HSE or insurers, should the occasion arise, a proactive approach to miniature railway safety. Continued monitoring and recording of inspections should lead to improvements in the safe and reliable operation of participating railways and help ensure that no further mandatory regulation or safety legislation is imposed upon us.

Participating inspectors should be regarded as providing a consultation service and railways being inspected will be under no obligation to follow recommendations contained in any inspectors report. The proposed inspection regime in no way absolves individual railway operators from their responsibility for the safe operation of their railway. It seeks to provide beneficial inspection, observation and advice by an experienced, independent third party in order to help ensure that safety “blind spots” and complacency do not lead to avoidable health and safety issues in the future.

Inspectors will not be held liable for any accident, injury or other damage deemed to have resulted from recommendations contained in their post inspection reports being implemented and it is down to the individual railway operator to assess the propriety of any recommendations made by inspectors.

The following should be read in conjunction with forms Vii 1 to Vii 5.

Railway Information, Form 1.

This is self-explanatory and simply records the location, gauge, length and other salient details of the operation of the railway being inspected.

Records and maintenance Form 2.

Each railway subject to inspection will be required to furnish the inspector(s) with details of elements of the railway’s records and maintenance schedules and procedures as listed on form 2.

Generally the inspections will be carried out in accordance with the recommendations contained in the HSE document “Passenger Carrying Miniature Railways, Guidance on Safe Practice”, hereafter referred to as PCMR. Inspectors will, therefore, make reference to the appropriate paragraphs 86 to 107 in PCMR when undertaking the inspection relevant to the form Vii 2.

The inspector(s) will complete form 2, stating which elements and areas have been checked and record their findings. Any areas identified by the inspector(s) as lacking or requiring improvement will be brought to the attention of the railway operator and the urgency of such remedial work agreed between the inspector(s) and the operator.

Track Inspection Form 3

Each railway subject to inspection will be required to furnish the inspector(s) with a suitable large scale track diagram and familiarise him with the normal modus operandum of the line, types of rolling stock and suspension systems in use and so on. The inspector(s) should be advised of any potential hazards which may be encountered whilst walking the track.

Generally the inspections will be carried out in accordance with the recommendations contained in the HSE document "Passenger Carrying Miniature Railways, Guidance on Safe Practice", hereafter referred to as PCMR. Inspectors will, therefore, make reference to the appropriate paragraphs from 20 to 68 in PCMR when undertaking the inspection relevant to the form Vii 3.

Track inspection will involve the inspector walking the entire length of the public running lines making periodic checks of gauge, cross levels, rail joints, sleepers, rail fastenings, and the track bed. Additionally, line side clearances, platforms, signalling, fencing and signage will be inspected.

The inspector will ascertain from the railway operator, the parameters used by the individual railway concerned as acceptable limits in terms of the following: Gauge widening; Cross level variation (vertical variation per X metre linear length of track); minimum radius of curves; clearances between widest vehicles and line side obstructions, platforms etc; Assuming the inspector considers these to be reasonable bearing in mind the design, weight and proportions of rolling stock used on the line, these parameters will then be used during the inspection.

The inspector(s) will complete form Vii 3, stating which elements and areas have been checked and record their findings. Any areas identified by the inspector(s) as requiring remedial work will be brought to the attention of the railway operator and the urgency of such remedial work agreed between the inspector(s) and the operator.

Sample Coach & Locomotive Inspections, Method Statement Forms 4 & 5

Each railway subject to inspection will be required to furnish the inspector with details of locomotives and coaches presently in operation, or intended for operation during the year in which the inspection takes place. The inspectors will require reasonable, safe access to a sample of vehicles being inspected. Ideally, inspector(s) should have the opportunity of riding on one or more vehicle or coach set and may ask for a demonstration of emergency brake application at normal line speed.

Generally the inspections will be carried out in accordance with the recommendations contained in the HSE document "Passenger Carrying Miniature Railways, Guidance on Safe Practice", hereafter referred to as PCMR. Inspectors will, therefore, make reference to the appropriate paragraphs 74 to 85 in PCMR when undertaking the inspection relevant to the form 4 & 5.

The inspector(s) will complete forms 4 & 5 , stating which elements and areas have been checked and record their findings. Any areas identified by the inspector(s) as requiring remedial work will be brought to the attention of the railway operator and the urgency of such remedial work agreed between the inspector(s) and the operator.