

Notes for Guards

ESME Public Running

V3.1, September 2025

The Role of the Guard

The guard is in charge of the train at all times, and is responsible for the safety of passengers, radio communication, operation of carriage brakes and operation of points when entering and leaving service.

Equipment

All guards must have:

- A whistle. Standby whistles are available in the clubhouse, but it is best to bring your own to ensure that it is in the best possible condition.
- A radio, tuned to the correct channel.
- A set of flags (green and red).
- In wet weather, a cloth for drying seats between runs.

Signalling to the Driver with the Whistle

- Give two short blasts to request the driver to start.
- Give one long blast (as loud as possible) to request the driver to stop.

Use of the Radio

- Always state your train ID and position when making reports on the radio.
- On trains departing from Drumshoreland station, routinely report when you pass Comrie Summit. This informs the station master and signallers that you have completed the climb from the station, and that the way is clear for the next departure.
- Report if you stop on the circuit for any reason. Report again when you restart.
- Listen to reports from signallers and other guards for early warning of problems ahead.

Emergency Stop Procedure

- Give one long blast on the whistle.
- On trains with guard-operated carriage brakes, apply the brakes fully.
- Report on the radio that you have stopped.
- Ask passengers to remain seated while the problem is resolved.
- Signal to any following train with the red flag.

Special Use of Red Flags on Blind Curves

If you have stopped on a blind curve and cannot get underway again immediately, you must take the following special measures to give the driver of any following train adequate warning that the line is blocked.

- Explain to the passengers and driver that you have to leave them for a few minutes to stop any following train.
- Walk back round the curve to allow an appropriate stopping distance and display your red flag. While you are doing this report the obstruction on the radio, and repeat until you get acknowledgment from the following train crew (or the signaller if there is no following train).
- If a train comes into view, give a stop signal with your whistle to draw attention to the red flag.
- When you have confirmed, visually or by radio, that there is no risk of collision, return to your train.

Note that the guard on the following train may need to perform the same procedure if he too has stopped on a blind curve.

Brake Test

Trains must not go into service with defective brakes.

Brake tests are normally performed on a test lap prior to public running, but if the configuration of the train is altered during the day (by changing the locomotive or carriages) it must be retested before returning to service.

The brake test procedures are as follows:

Preparation for Brake Test, to be Performed on All Trains

- Check that all brakes are enabled.
- Inform the signaller that you are departing on a test lap.

On Trains With Guard-Operated Carriage Brakes

- On the straight near Laird's Halt perform an emergency stop (give a long blast on the whistle and simultaneously apply full braking).
- The driver should throttle back and allow the train to come to a halt on carriage brakes alone.
- Release the brakes and whistle to the driver to proceed.
- Report on the radio that the brake test is complete and the train is underway again.
- On completion of the lap, allow the driver to bring the train to a halt at the station with the locomotive brake¹ alone.

On Trains with Driver-Operated Brakes

- On the straight near Laird's Halt perform an emergency stop (give a long blast on the whistle).
- The driver throttles back and applies the brakes. If the train has independent carriage brakes, these should be applied on their own to test them individually.
- Allow the train to come to a halt.
- Whistle to the driver to proceed.
- Report on the radio that the brake test is complete and the train is underway again.
- On completion of the lap, the driver applies the brakes to bring the train to a halt in the station. If the train has an independent locomotive brake, this should be applied on its own to test it individually.

On Trains Operated by a Single Crew Member Acting as Driver and Guard

- On the straight near Laird's Halt throttle back and apply the brakes fully to stop the train.
- Restart and report on the radio that the brake test is complete and you are underway again.

Purpose of the Brake Test

The purpose is two-fold:

- It allows the driver and guard, who have direct responsibility for passenger safety, to satisfy themselves that the locomotive and carriage brakes are effective, and decide whether the train goes into service.

1 Throughout this document the term 'locomotive brake' is used broadly to mean 'locomotive and/or driving truck brake'.

- It allows the guard to practise an emergency stop. It is important that this should be a well rehearsed procedure, so that it can be performed without hesitation in a genuine emergency.

Preparation for Departure

- In wet weather, use a cloth to dry the seats as much as possible between runs.
- Assist passengers to embark, especially on some of the older carriages with running boards because these may tip due to uneven weight distribution. Hold onto the end rails to stabilise them.
- Invite passengers to leave large bags or awkward hand held items such as umbrellas with the station master for safe keeping.
- Advise passengers wearing long coats or skirts to gather them up to prevent hems dragging on the track.

Departure

When the station master whistles that the train is clear to depart, perform a final check that all passengers are seated safely and give two short blasts on the whistle to confirm readiness for departure.

While the Train is in Motion

Safety Issues Requiring an Immediate Emergency Stop

Perform an emergency stop if you see:

- Passengers standing up.
- Feet off the running boards.
- Passengers rocking, leaning out or doing anything that might tip the carriage.
- Coat or skirt hems dragging on the track, or close enough to risk snagging.
- Derailment (watch for these particularly when traversing points).
- Obstruction on the line ahead.

Do not attempt to solve problems by calling out to the passengers or the driver. It is rarely possible to make yourself understood. It is better to stop the train and speak directly to those concerned.

Other Potential Safety Issues

The following actions are low risk and do not warrant an emergency stop.

- Passengers grabbing hold of passing undergrowth. If you see this, speak to them after the run and point out the risk of cuts from sharp stems and thorns. (The gardening squad routinely remove these hazards, but cannot guarantee to find them all.)
- Passengers pointing at interesting things on the circuit. This is a reflex action for children and adults alike, and often involves placing hands beyond the carriage width. No response is required from the guard unless passengers are simultaneously leaning out and risking tipping the carriage.

On Trains with Guard-Operated Carriage Brakes

Be ready to assist with braking at all times.

- Look out for obstructions on the line ahead. In most cases the driver will see these and stop the train in plenty of time, but as a precaution you should assist with gentle application of the brakes - or full application if collision is imminent.
- Pay attention on return to the station in case the locomotive brakes fail or the driver misjudges the stopping distance. Apply the brakes if necessary.
- If requested to do so by the driver, apply gentle braking on the descents.

Breakdown

If the train stops on the circuit and cannot be restarted:

- Use the radio to summon assistance. Ask the passengers to remain seated until help arrives.
- If the problem is a derailment, it may be necessary to ask some passengers to disembark temporarily while carriages are lifted back onto the track.
- If the problem is carriage brake failure, disable the brakes manually and ask the driver to complete the circuit at reduced speed with locomotive brakes alone. On completion of the run you must take the train out of service.
- If the train cannot be restarted, wait for support staff to arrive and pass the passengers into their care to be escorted back to the station. Note that this is the last resort because it may impose additional hazards such as crossing rough terrain. In some cases, e.g. if the breakdown has occurred on an embankment or if there are passengers with restricted

mobility on board, it may be necessary for staff to push the train to a safe location for evacuation.

- The guard should always stay with the broken down train and keep the signallers informed of the situation by radio.

Leaving the Circuit Temporarily

Some problems, such as low steam pressure, may be solved by taking the train off the main circuit temporarily.

Suitable exits from circuit vary depending on the running plan for the day, but likely points are Memorial Halt, Lairds Halt and the spur to the locomotive and rolling stock storage area.

- Report that you have stopped and explain the situation on the radio.
- Confirm when you have left the circuit and have reset the points for through trains.
- Keep the passengers informed about the delay, and ask them to remain seated.
- Report on the radio when you are ready to rejoin the circuit, and wait for clearance from the signallers.
- Use the red flag if necessary to stop trains approaching from behind.
- When you have rejoined the circuit, ensure that all points are again reset for through trains, and report when you are underway.

Permitted Brake Configurations

It is the driver's responsibility to match the locomotive with suitable carriages to ensure that the train as a whole has adequate braking capability.

The guard is required only to verify that the arrangement works well during the brake test, and need not necessarily be concerned with the details. However, it is useful for guards to be aware of the permitted configurations. They are listed here for information:

- Driver operated locomotive brake and guard operated carriage brakes.
- Driver operated locomotive brake only (no carriage brakes). This configuration is restricted to locomotives with strong brakes hauling a limited number of carriages.
- Driver operated locomotive and carriage brakes. These may be independent or connected to act as a single system. In some cases, the guard may be provided with a dual control for emergency use.