

Part B

1. Our vision

To ensure a consistent and exceptional experience to customers across the entire customer journey.

2. Purpose

This document sets out high-level guidance about the provision of information throughout the customer journey, including during disruption. It provides a framework to which operators can tailor their local plans according to individual circumstances, in order to meet ORR licence obligations.

3. Scope

This Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) applies to all Passenger railway undertakings (franchised passenger train operators and Open Access passenger train operators), Station Facility Owners (SFOs), Network Rail (for managed stations) and National Rail Enquiries and incorporates:

- good practice for implementing requirements relating to provision of customer information;
- the national passenger information during disruption programme (see Appendix A);
- the arrangements for measuring the output and reviewing the effectiveness of this document; and
- the arrangements for the revision of this document.

4. Related documents

This ACOP supports the relevant provisions in the Network Code, Railway Operational Code (ROC) and does not amend or alter in any way the provisions therein.

This ACOP should be read in conjunction with:

- Information Development Group's Good Practice Guides for Providing Customer Information;
- Network Rail's "Guidance Note for Control, Response and Station Employees: Information During Disruption"; and
- the ORR's Regulatory Statement: "Information for passengers – guidance on meeting the licence condition"

Links to each of the above can be found in Appendix C.

5. Aims & objectives

The aim of this Approved Code of Practice is to highlight the importance of relevant, accurate, timely, consistent and useful information to passengers and other interested parties to help customers make informed decisions across the whole of their journey.

It is crucial to recognise that delivering customer experience is not just about systems and processes. The role of staff - whether on trains, stations, answering help point calls or working in social media teams - is vital, especially in periods of disruption.

6. Requirements

Customer information encompasses all aspects of the journey, from planning in advance to the arrival at the intended destination.

Passenger railway undertakings, Network Rail, Station Facility Owners and National Rail Enquiries are required to implement industry good practice in every area where they are responsible for information delivery. This is further detailed within the 'Information Development Group's Good Practice Guides for Providing Customer Information'. This should also ensure recognition of the PIDD recommendations.

Each element within the Guides has actionable items; it has been agreed by industry colleagues that their implementation will further improve customer experience.

7. The customer journey

This is defined as any touchpoint a customer would use to help or support informed decisions irrespective of type of journey or means of contact. The document provides guidance for provision of information to passengers in the following four categories:

- pre journey;
- at station;
- on train; and
- post journey.

7.1 During disruption (the process)

This document will also provide guidance on additional measures that should be implemented during disruption.

Each railway undertaking should define its Service Disruption Threshold/s above which these PIDD arrangements will apply, along with the ways of determining this. The enhanced level of mobilisation that results from this will be referred to as 'Customer Service Level 2' (CSL2). These thresholds may be railway undertaking/route-specific or may be locally targeted, taking into account such things as service frequency and customer volumes, in addition to customer feedback and research.

The declaration of CSL2 allows a wider understanding of the situation throughout the industry, notably amongst other railway undertakings, and is accepted as the trigger required for additional assistance from industry partners.

CSL2 should be declared once the Service Disruption Threshold/s has/have been reached. Flexibility remains with the relevant Operator's Control Centre to declare it in other circumstances for the benefit of customers.

In order to effectively deliver the above requirements within the railway undertaking, Control and Customer Service teams should have an understanding of the overall PIDD process and its aims and objectives, with special reference to the following aspects/principles:

- enhanced mobilisation – CSL2;
- prioritised plans; and
- Holding & Core Messages.

An appreciation of this ACOP should be included in the training/competence modules for all relevant personnel.

7.2 Pre Journey

Before travelling, all railway undertakings must ensure that customers are able to obtain timely and accurate information through the following means:

- website and apps;
- contact centres;
- travel alerts; and
- recorded information telephone lines.

Within each of these categories, operators must ensure that customers can do the following:

- *alternative travel* – customers should be able to easily weigh up all possible modes of transport;
- *station information* – customers should be provided with directions to and from stations, including other public transport;
- *timetable* - customers should be able to easily access timetable information and operators should make reasonable endeavours to inform customers of any changes that have been made to the normal timetable;
- *ticketing* - customers should be provided with relevant information to enable them to make an informed decision on the purchase of any tickets;
- *disruption* - customers should be offered alternative options if their service is affected and the railway undertaking should make best endeavours to notify customers of any delays or disruption in advance; and
- *engineering work* – customers should be informed in advance of any planned engineering work that will affect their train services from any station on the route that the engineering work impacts.

7.3 At station

Railway undertakings and station employees have a key role in the provision of accurate and timely information whilst at the station.

Station employees

People are pivotal in providing information to customers and where appropriate should be visible to customers and have access to all of the information that a customer has. Devices should be fit for purpose with web access, allowing up to date information that at least matches that of a customer.

Regular training should be provided by railway undertakings to their staff in line with any new technology/devices that are being implemented. Staff as a result, will efficiently be able to provide customers with accurate information through the latest technology.

Station facilities

Railway undertakings must provide customers with clear information relating to facilities available at the station. Station Facility Owners (SFO) must also ensure that the Station Made Easy (SME) pages of Knowledge Base are kept up-to-date.

Wayfinding at station

Reasonable effort must be made by all SFOs to provide clear, accessible guidance to all customers at stations. This includes being cognisant to where information provision is provided.

Customer Information Screens

The accuracy of CIS is incredibly important as an information source for both customers and employees. Ensuring this information is accurate and relevant must be a priority for the station facility owner and consequently it may be necessary to show only trains that are running when large numbers of trains are cancelled.

Station facility owners should document their policy for the suppression of non-critical messages and the action that can be taken if message integrity becomes poor/the system is overwhelmed, including the introduction of “disruption mode”.

Announcements

Announcements should always be consistent with the CIS, they should also be kept to a minimum allowing customers to know when to listen. The timing and content of announcements should be considered depending on the size of the station and the frequency of services travelling through the station.

During disruption, automated train announcements should be supplemented with information from the Core Message. The preference for these announcements to enable the best possible customer experience during disruption is:

1. manual local announcements;
2. recorded announcements; and
3. automated announcements.

To increase customers' trust in the information they are being given manual announcements should be made ahead of automated announcements during disruption. These preferences also apply when apologising for the impact of the disruption.

Help Points

Railway undertakings that have Help Points located at their stations will provide information to passengers on how to use the Help Point and what it is for.

Staff who answer requests through the Help Point will be trained on all systems required to give the relevant information. Each railway undertaking will provide a standard for Help Points for their staff to include:

- a maximum time to answer the call;
- how the call should be answered; and
- what to do in emergencies.

7.4 On the train

On the train, the primary responsibility for the provision of information to customers rests with the on train team including traincrew, revenue protection employees and others as appropriate. This information flow is especially important during disruption.

Information flow

The on-train employees should be at least as well informed as customers with web access. A range of devices are now available and each railway undertaking should determine what is appropriate for their operation and review this on an ongoing basis.

Driver Only Operation (DOO) makes this difficult to achieve in all circumstances and railway undertakings should define their plans in this respect. It is noted that customers' need for information remains the same whether on a DOO train or otherwise. Where practicable, information about any disruption should be sent to the train, either to the driver or directly to the customers on the train, using technology such as GSMR.

Announcements/Passenger Information Screens (PIS)

Announcements should always be consistent with the PIS. Customers rely on the on train information to reassure them throughout their journey. This includes the stopping pattern of the train and whether they are in the right carriage of the train.

Operators should ensure that this is up to date at the start of every journey and where practical, updated along the route.

This becomes even more important during disruption, automated train announcements should be supplemented with information from the Core Message (where practical). The preference to enable the best possible customer experience during disruption is:

1. manual announcements
2. automated announcements

To increase customers' trust in the information they are being told, manual announcements should be made ahead of automated announcements during disruption. These preferences also apply when apologising for the impact of the disruption.

During CSL2-level disruption the Core Message information can be used as the basis for what customers are told although in the absence of details about the incident/delays, basic information must still be given.

On-board employees are also required to make announcements within 2 minutes when the train comes to a stop between stations. DOO operators must consider how best to achieve this in their local plans.

Staff engagement

On-train teams (where available) should be visible, this involves walking through the train offering advice and reassurance to customers.

7.5 Post journey

All railway undertakings must ensure that customers are able to obtain the following information once they have completed their journey:

- *lost property* – all efforts should be made to ensure that customers know who to contact when they have misplaced any of their possessions during their journey.
- *onward travel information* – railway undertakings need to ensure that customers are provided with clear information relating to connections and onward travel once they arrive at their terminus station.
- *feedback* – railway undertakings need to ensure customers are aware of how to offer feedback and if necessary how to claim compensation or refunds.

8. Disruption information

Key requirements during disruption

- Railway undertakings should monitor the quality of their own output for CSL2 incidents and should carry out an in-depth review of a minimum of one CSL2 incident at least annually. This review should be carried out by an independent party (such as another railway undertaking, Network Rail or RDG) and should focus on the customer impact, including the quality of information. The outputs of the review should be used to improve the provision of information to customers where practicable.

- Each railway undertaking should have its Core Messages audited by a third party (e.g. another railway undertaking or the National Rail Communication Centre (NRCC)) at least once annually.
- Railway undertakings and Network Rail Routes/Stations should hold cross-industry reviews of local plans in order to make sure they are up-to-date and to share good practices.
- The Day A for B process needs to be formally communicated by Network Rail Operations to Train Planning, Operations and Customer Information departments and fully understood by all.
- In the event of longer term disruption – railway undertakings, where possible, should develop a process that enables passenger information to be fed into downstream systems at the earliest practical opportunity for the duration of the disruption.
- Spot checks should be carried out on the Day A for B process and railway undertaking websites, to ensure the information disseminated is correct.

8.1 Operations

Particularly during disruption, customers need to be able to make informed decisions about their journey and rely on the operator to give them timely and accurate information.

The Control Room (however organised) is central to this provision. Timely decision making and the impact for passengers should be disseminated to frontline staff and customer information systems through all available channels.

To aid this:

- Network Rail should work with railway undertakings to provide a Prioritised Plan. Network Rail needs to report the level of adherence to the production of Prioritised Plans by Control.

Holding Message

When an incident occurs that is likely to breach a railway undertaking's CSL2 threshold, a Holding Message should be issued within 10 minutes, unless there is a good reason not to do so.

- Identify/agree locally where responsibility rests, the style of the message, channels used and a 'within' time.

Holding Messages are designed to give initial advice that there is disruption and delays may occur.

Mobilisation of operations and additional Employees

The Control is responsible for engaging and mobilising additional resources as required, this may include operational, technical and customer service support, to enable customers to be looked after appropriately.

- Identify locally in greater detail how this will be achieved including reference to pre-agreed control manual/on-call arrangements.

APPENDIX C – LINKS TO RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Information Development Group’s Good Practice Guide-
<https://atoc.sharepoint.com/sites/1/cx/Experience/Empowered/Good%20Practice%20Guide/GPG%20v3.1.pdf>
- Network Rail’s “Guidance Note for Control, Response and Station Employees: Information During Disruption- <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B23olbTrlonyMW44RVFRdUUwVEE>
- ORR’s Regulatory Statement: “Information for passengers – guidance on meeting the licence condition- <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B23olbTrlonyYy1IM1hxYW15Xzg>