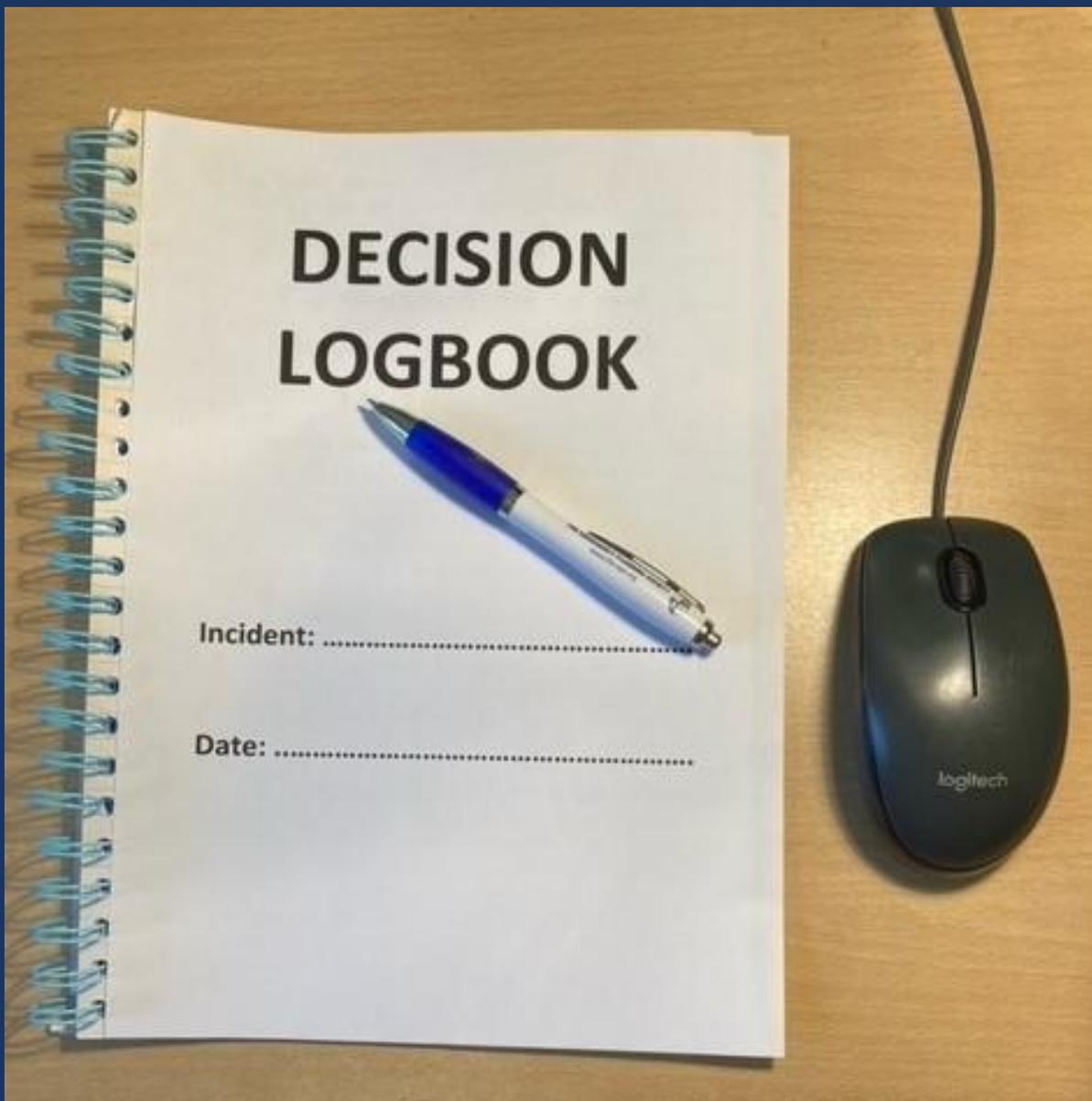# Rail Delivery Group

≷ National Rail

RDG Guidance Note:
Logging and Loggists

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About this document

Explanatory Note

The Rail Delivery Group is not a regulatory body and compliance with Guidance Notes or Approved Codes of Practice is not mandatory; they reflect good practice and are advisory only. Users are recommended to evaluate the guidance against their own arrangements in a structured and systematic way, noting that 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 adopt) elements of the guidance should be documented. Compliance with any or all of the contents herein, is entirely at an organisation's own discretion.

Other Guidance Notes or Approved Codes of Practice are available on the Rail Delivery Group (RDG) website.

Executive Summary:

This Guidance Note provides guidance on requirements pertaining to logging and loggists, particularly in the context of major incident response.

Issue Record

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1	July 2016	Original version
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This document is reviewed on a regular 3 year cycle.

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1 Introduction and purpose

1.1 Introduction

Most ~~emergency~~ incidents will be dealt with effectively with the situation reverting reasonably rapidly to 'business as usual'. There will be a need to capture operational ~~While almost inevitably there will be~~ lessons to be learned as a result of decisions made or not made, along with elements of good practice, to influence the review and updating of ~~with~~ plans, processes and procedures ~~reviewed and updated~~ as appropriate~~,~~. The impact of major incidents on the railway will ~~this will~~ generally be felt internally by the affected ~~to the~~ organisation and its immediate partners. However, ~~in a small minority of cases, such~~some incidents will lead to public inquiries or criminal investigations, with railway undertakings and/or their staff called to give evidence. It is therefore vital that, in respect of the response, accurate records are kept of who made what decisions, the evidence and rationale on which these were based and who carried out what actions. These records will serve not only to support any inquiry but also to offer a degree of protection to those railway undertaking employees involved in managing the response to the incident.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this Guidance Note is to document good practice with regard to the keeping of logs.

It should also be recognised that the role of the person keeping the log – referred to in this document as the loggist – is both an important and demanding one. While previous experience of Minute taking may be highly desirable, the loggist should also be ready to proactively challenge decisions and explanations as and when necessary to ensure that a good quality log is maintained. This Guidance Note accordingly also suggests factors to be considered when appointing a loggist.

2 Overview of role

2.1 Purpose

As a minimum, the purpose of the role is to record all decisions taken, not taken or deferred within the group charged with directing the incident response on behalf of the company, along with the rationale given by the decision-maker in each case. The title of this group is likely to be organisation dependent – for the purposes of this Guidance Note the term Crisis Management Group has been adopted, along with the term Crisis Commander for the Chair of this Group. While aimed specifically at this Group, the content of this Guidance Note will also be of direct relevance to other persons and groups making decisions in the context of incident response, for example the ICT (Incident Care Team) ~~Co-ordination~~Deployment Centre.

The record should be of an appropriate quality and completeness to be used, if necessary, in any subsequent enquiry, whether internal or public/coronial.

In addition, it will generally be useful to include – or keep a separate log of – events during the response phase~~.~~ to assist with the building of a time-line.

Finally, the loggist may also be required to follow up on actions agreed at meetings of the Crisis Management Group, ensuring as far as practicable that these are being progressed, and report back to the Group accordingly.

2.2 What the loggist is not

It is important that the loggist is not seen as a general 'runner' or administrative support – to do so shows a failure to acknowledge the critical importance of the role and is liable to distract the loggist from their key purpose.

Similarly, the loggist should not be expected to take full minutes or have responsibility for undertaking any actions or decisions (beyond keeping the log itself).

3 Log keeping

3.1 Importance of keeping a log

The keeping of logs pertaining to the response to significant and major incidents is important both for internal and external reasons.

Generally:

- They allow those making decisions as part of any command group to record their justifications for a course of action or decision in a contemporaneous written record of the thought process supporting such a course of action or decision.

- They provide capability for honestly held beliefs and actions taken in good faith at the time to be recorded and rationalised.

Internally:

- They provide a record of all planning, strategic, tactical and operational decisions made and actions taken during an incident and as such are a key input to any internal or joint post incident review.

Externally:

- They ensure an accurate record is available in the event of any subsequent investigation, public inquiry or litigation.

Overall, the keeping of accurate records provides protection for all involved in the decision-making process:

- They provide a note (aide-mémoire) from which to justify reasoning and decisions at a later point or date.

- They assist in promoting coherent reasoning in the exercising of discretion.

3.2 Written vs. electronic logs

The focus of this Guidance Note is primarily on hand-written logs. If electronic methods of logging are used, railway undertakings should assure themselves that they comply with the key principles contained in Section 9.2, particularly with regard to providing an audit trail of any changes.

3.2 Legal status

The log and all associated paperwork becomes legal documentation and could be used at a later date in a public inquiry or other legal proceedings. These will be disclosable but sensitive personal detail will likely be redacted or otherwise controlled.

4 Accountability and responsibility

4.1 Accountability

The loggist is accountable to the person for whom they are logging – usually this will be the Crisis Commander.

4.2 Responsibility

The loggist is responsible for recording and documenting all issues/actions/decisions made by the Crisis Commander and Crisis Management Group. If the Crisis Commander attends meetings of other groups with responsibilities for the overall incident response – such as the Strategic Coordinating Group – they should be accompanied by a loggist if possible. For meetings within their own Crisis Management Group a loggist should always be present working under their direction.

5 Identification and deployment

It is recommended that a core of individuals within the organisation be identified as potential loggists and trained accordingly. It is recommended that the minimum number of such persons should be four so as to provide reasonable cover for leave, sickness, shift changes, etc.

The key skills, experience and behaviours associated with a good loggist are (in no particular order):

- Clear handwriting (if a written log is to be kept).

- Good written communication skills, including a good command of English.

- A preparedness to challenge in the event that key information is not provided or is not clear.

- Some familiarity with company business processes – in particular operations and emergency response arrangements and the associated terminology - will be a distinct advantage in helping the loggist follow the meeting and hence identify key items for recording.

Contact details (both office and personal) of all persons identified as potential loggists should be available to the senior management team and also the Control office so that they can be activated.

Company procedures and documentation should reflect that the loggist is a core role within the Crisis Management Group.

Having been activated and arrived at the deployment location, the loggist should be given a pre-brief by the Crisis Commander. This should include a broad overview of the situation and guidance on what they will be expected to log.

It is recommended that, ideally, loggists should only be logging for a maximum of 1 hour after which they should have a minimum break for 15 minutes. Loggists may have to support protracted incidents, in which case their resilience and replacement should be scheduled appropriately.

If there is a need for the Crisis Management Group to meet before a suitable loggist is available, consideration should be given to recording the proceedings using either audio or video means. Another alternative is to ring Control and ask them to record key decisions on any log they are keeping (noting that, in general, phone calls made to Control are themselves recorded). In such cases, the recorded material should be secured and stored as per a written log (see Section 9.5). In the event of it being needed to support a subsequent investigation. it may be necessary to arrange for all audio recordings to be transcribed.

6   Training

The Emergency Planning College offers a one-day course under the title 'Working as a Decision-Loggist', the content of which covers:

- The legal and policy context in which the Decision Loggist operates

- The role of the Decision Loggist in an emergency response.

- The key requirements of the decision maker and the importance of recording decisions accordingly.

- Demonstrating competence as a Decision Loggist in a simulated emergency response exercise

See more at: https://www.epcresilience.com/closed-courses/working-as-a-decision-loggist

The course is not offered on a regular basis at Easingwold but is intended to be delivered at the preferred location and on the preferred date of the client organisation. It is also delivered online.

Other organisations – both commercial companies and a number of local authorities – also run loggist courses on an occasional basis. As of the date of issue of this Guidance Note, the BTP also offers loggist courses to rail staff at no cost. While there is no nationally agreed syllabus, it is suggested that to be credible, any course should cover as a minimum:

- Command structure

- The role of the loggist

- How to make logs

- Recording of decisions and the associated rationale

- Aftermath and consequences, including potentially use of logs as evidence in subsequent enquiries or Court proceedings

- An opportunity to practice logging (e.g. through watching and logging a video of a meeting).

7   Exercising

It is recommended that all identified loggists are included in exercises involving the setting up and participation of the Crisis Management Group. Where it is not possible for a person identified as a potential loggist to attend such exercises, other arrangements should be put in place to ensure they maintain their competence in the role.

8 Documentation

It is recommended that either a logbook or supply of log sheets should be kept available at a suitable location, either in or close to the room where it is expected that the Crisis Management Group will meet. Its location should be made known to those likely to be members of this Team and also those within the organisation who have been identified as potential loggists. It should also be documented within the company emergency plan. It is also recommended that the identified organisation loggists should keep their own supply of logbooks/sheets in recognition that meetings of the Crisis Management Group may take place online.

9 How to log

9.1 Initiation of log

A log (or separate logs) of both events and decisions should be initiated as soon as practicable once a tactical or strategic command team has been established. It should be maintained until such time as the incident is concluded or responsibility passes to others.

9.2 Generic format and content

The log should comply with the following:

- Be CIA (Clear Intelligible Accurate)

- Be written in black ink/ballpoint pen

- Be in chronological order, with the time and date of each entry recorded (using the 24-hour clock)

- Have entries numbered consistently and methodically

- Record facts, not assumptions/personal comments/opinions

- Record non-verbal communication (e.g. nodding or shaking of heads to indicate agreement or objection)

- Be complete, continuous and contemporaneous (i.e. entries should be made at the time the information is received or at the earliest opportunity afterwards within a 24 hour period)

- Include accurate timings of when information is received or sent

- If notes, maps, etc. are utilised, these must be noted within the log and as otherwise directed by the accountable person

- Relevant faxes, emails, text messages, notifications, phone calls, etc. should be similarly recorded

- Not include shorthand or abbreviations unless these are recognised terms (either generally or within the rail industry)

- Show clearly the correction of any errors or omissions - when an alteration is necessary, a single line must be drawn through the error, correction entered and the alteration initialled

- No entry may be erased or obliterated

- There must be no overwriting or double entries

10 General Advice

While this Guidance Note has focused primarily on circumstances when a dedicated loggist is needed, general advice is that a record of all decisions and their rationale should be kept by all individuals involved in managing disruptive events (whether pre-planned or otherwise) – this should be emphasised in any planning meetings or briefing sessions.

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