5.1.4 Work on or adjacent to Railways

5.1.4.1 When working on or adjacent to railways, specialist training is required and a working knowledge of railway terminology is essential. Before any personnel can work on or adjacent to Railway Operating Company controlled infrastructure they must complete a Personal Track Safety (PTS) training course, hold a valid Sentinel card and have passed a medical. Workers on London Underground will require a valid LUCAS card.

5.1.4.2 Working ‘on or near the line’ is defined as within 3m of a running rail or 1.25m when working adjacent to a platform. Working ‘on the lineside’ is the area between the area defined as ‘on or near the line’ and the railway boundary fence.

5.1.4.3 The safest way of undertaking work on or adjacent to the railway is to separate workers from trains. On Railway Operating Company controlled infrastructure, this is known as ‘green zone working’ and involves blocking one or more lines to trains and/or setting up safe systems of work (SSOW) which would protect from trains. On London Underground most work takes place at night when the network is closed to passenger traffic and the traction current is discharged. This time is known as ‘engineering hours’.

5.1.4.4 It is not always possible to block lines to trains and some work has to take place on lines where trains continue to run: this is known as ‘red zone working’. ‘Red zone working’ involves warning workers of approaching trains in time for them to get clear of the line and into ‘positions of safety’ well before the train arrives. This type of working requires very strict safety systems to be in place.

5.1.4.5 When a group needs to work ‘on or near the line’, a Controller of Site Safety (COSS) sets up a SSOW to make sure nobody is put in danger by trains or electrification equipment. Working methods and emergency procedures should be established in conjunction with the COSS and Railway Operating Company.

5.1.4.6 Where drilling activity is to be carried out on or adjacent to rail tracks, then all the appropriate Railway Operating Company Safety Regulations must be obtained and strictly adhered to. Personnel working on or near railway tracks may be asked to attend a Railway Operating Company’s Safety Induction Course. Ensure that approval and instructions are obtained on a daily basis from the COSS.

5.1.4.7 Overhead line equipment (OLE) provides trains with 25,000 volts AC. OLE must be treated as being live at all times. Cables attached to these structure must be considered to be live as well. Before starting work on or near the line where electrified overhead lines are present, written permits must be obtained from the appropriate Railway Operating Company. This permission should detail making safe any electrical system, earthing, insulation and warning limits. Care must be taken to ensure that no personnel, equipment or drilling plant comes within 2.75 metres (9 feet) of live OLE.

5.1.4.8 The drilling activity area should be clearly defined and no personnel should stray out of the defined area.

5.1.4.9 Where conductor rails are present, they should be clearly identified and special precautions as defined by the Railway Operating Company should be observed.

5.1.4.10 Ensure that relevant safety/protective equipment is available and that high visibility clothing is worn. Refer to section 13.2 of this manual.

5.1.4.11 All work carried out on railway property will be supervised by trained and authorised personnel.

NOTE: Network Rail are currently trialling new rules and procedures for working in or on the railways.