

	Document Title	Working On Or Near Railways Policy		
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Sankey Canal Restoration Society

Working On or Near Railways Policy

1. Statement Of Intent

The Society's policy:

- Is valid from the Issue Date until such time as an updated version is published.
- Will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if required by changes to the Society's activities, to legislation or to best practice guidance.
- Applies to all SCRS Members and Non-Members who are carrying out activities for, or on behalf of the Society, paid or unpaid. The Society does not currently employ any staff.

The Society's intention is to:

- Prevent accidents and injuries to Members, Non-Members and Others.
- Promote good health and wellbeing.
- Manage health, safety and environmental risks when carrying out the Society's activities.
- Provide instructions, information and training (where appropriate).
- Ensure that suitable clothing, footwear and personal protective equipment is worn when necessary.
- Provide, maintain and securely store any tools, equipment, substances and materials.
- Ensure that activities are carried out in a safe and healthy working environment and that arrangements are in place in case of an emergency.
- Consult with Members on matters affecting their health, safety and wellbeing.

2. Introduction

The Society works to promote and enhance the Canal as part of the wider regeneration of the communities through which it passes. Canal and railway histories are intertwined and both were part of transport revolutions that transformed the lives of people locally, nationally and worldwide. SCRS adopted Earlestown Station in February 2026 on the historic 1830 Liverpool – Manchester railway line to make it a more welcoming place for people and to help make it the heart of the community (for example litter picking, vegetation clearance and flower planting). We work in partnership with railway owners and operators (Northern Rail, Merseyrail and Network Rail) and other community volunteering groups.

There are other sections of the canal that are in close proximity to railway lines and this policy explains the requirements for working on or near railway lines.

These requirements also apply when services are provided by Others (whether hired in or not). Additionally, the Society will need to assure itself that the appropriate insurance and consents are in place if it is intended that these are to be provided or obtained by Others.

Note that the Society does not currently own any plant or machinery.

3. Station Adoption Principles

SCRS meets the requirements of the railway station's owner:

- The society is based close to the station.
- The society is committed to improving the station.
- The society is representative of the community and it is inclusive. It encourages new members and works with other community groups and partnerships to support a sustainable future.

4. Essential Requirements

Volunteers Must:

1. Read the Northern Rail Station Adoption Safety Briefing (sections 9 & 10) and sign to confirm acceptance before carrying out any activities on or near the railway.
2. Follow the Code of Conduct and any requirements set out by the railway owner or operator.
3. Comply with the instructions of the SCRS Station Manager or Task Team Leader.
4. Wear an orange high visibility vest at all times and without exception – no other colour allowed.
5. Not go on the track or in any place that distracts a train crew or poses a risk to themselves or Others.
6. Positively and immediately intervene to maintain the safety of people.
7. Keep all tools and equipment away from platform edges and tether loose items if necessary.
8. Inform the SCRS Station Manager or Task Team Leader of a fault or issue with the station or railway (who will then report it to the railway owner or operator for attention).

SCRS Station Manager or Task Team Leader Must:

1. Prepare an Annual Plan of intended activities to be carried out at the station.
2. Conduct a safety briefing and obtain the permission of the railway owner or operator before the activity starts e.g. Risk Assessment, Station Adoption Safety Briefing & Signing In-Sheet.
3. Appoint lookouts to warn of approaching trains and to acknowledge the train crew's horn.
4. Ensure that Volunteers are always in the care of a competent Task Team Leader.
5. Positively and immediately intervene to maintain the safety of people.

- Note that Volunteers will only carry out minor 'construction' activities associated with gardening schemes or improvements. They will not carry out electrical work or repair or paint station structures (except by express agreement with a Station Manager, for example painting of fencing).
- Digging will only be permitted when it is certain that there are no buried cables.

5. Code Of Conduct

All Station Adopter groups and Volunteers must comply with the Community Rail Network's Code of Conduct:

- Permission must be obtained from the train operator (and/or Network Rail where relevant) before undertaking any work at a station and only within specified areas (see boundary map).
- Comply with all terms and conditions specified by the train operator (and/or Network Rail where relevant):
 - Sign in and out at the station.
 - Log every visit.
 - Wear specified orange high-vis gear and use suitable tools and equipment.
 - Never interfere with railway equipment.
 - Report any incidents using the specified procedures.
 - Ensure no volunteers/group members ever work under the influence of drugs or alcohol
 - Ensure no volunteers/group members go on the track or lineside under any circumstances.
- Never put yourself or anyone else in a situation that poses a personal risk.

- Do not act in a manner that brings SCRS or the community rail movement into disrepute.
- Any issues regarding the train operator or Network Rail must be raised directly and handled internally within the rail industry.
- Ensure the group is open to everyone regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, or religious belief, and operates as per the Equal Opportunities Act.
- All group members and volunteers should adhere to the inclusive, positive behaviours set out in the Women in Community Rail code of conduct.
- Use and draw on the guidelines in Community Rail Network’s station adoption guide.

6. Insurance

- Volunteers are covered by the station owner’s insurance arrangements, assuming compliance with the above Essential Requirements and Code of Conduct.
- Activities on Network Rail’s land must be agreed first to ensure that NR’s insurance policy is applicable.
- SCRS’ insurance policy includes public liability cover. Activities on or near railway property must be confirmed with the insurance broker by the Secretary (or another designated Committee Member).

7. Costs and Expenses

- Also see P009 Financial Policy.
- The Society does not normally pay for Volunteers’ travel or refreshment but it will seek to reimburse any expenses that are reasonably incurred to further the charity’s aims AND with the prior agreement of the Treasurer (or another designated person).
- Annual expenditure to improve the station or hold an event will be agreed by the Society and included in the Annual Plan including the estimated cost, budget and funding source.

8. Railway Contact Details

General maintenance, cleanliness, presentation, tickets, customer information or general safety	enquiries@northernrailway.co.uk 0800 200 60 60 (on train operating days)
Train or station faults	faults@northernrailway.co.uk Northern App - fault reporting www.northernrailway.co.uk/train-or-station-fault
Weeds / litter on the line, broken fencing	Network Rail 03457 114141
Emergencies and crimes	British Transport Police 0800 405040 or 999
Non-emergency incident	British Transport Police text 61016 www.btp.police.uk

9. Earlestown Station Plan

- See page 4

10. Safety Briefing

- See page 5



Station adoption safety briefing

The aim of this safety briefing is to enable our station adopters and volunteers to enjoy the difference they make to our stations in a safe manner.

Getting you started

As a volunteer you will have an induction which will normally be carried out by your team leader and will as a minimum comprise information on:

- the specific location you are volunteering at
- general control measures which will keep you and others safe when completing works on stations
- control measures specific to the location for keeping you and others safe
- signing in process at our staffed locations. You will be required to sign in and out on each visit to comply with our emergency evacuation process
- personal protective equipment - you will be given a high visibility vest to be worn at all times and we ask you to ensure you wear suitable non-slip footwear and appropriate clothing/gloves for the particular season. Always bring appropriate hot or cold fluids to remain hydrated whilst volunteering. Consider wearing eye protection to protect against any flying debris.
- please report any signs of trespass, vandalism or erratic customer behaviour. Your quick thinking may prevent a suicide or anti-social behaviour.





Key rules to follow

- never go on or anywhere near the railway lines
- always remain at least 1.25 metres or 4 feet away from the platform edge whilst carrying out tasks
- never be under the influence of drink or drugs while carrying out any volunteering on the railway
- if you are taking prescribed medication please declare this to your lead volunteer or your Northern contact who can advise you or seek advice for you
- only use the authorised access route, close any boundary gate and lock it when you leave
- please remember electricity is always live and you must not carry any item that may come within 2.75 metres or nine feet from the overhead lines. These lines carry 25000 volts
- do not carry out any digging unless you have been told underground cables are absent
- if you feel any of your actions may put yourself or others in danger then don't carry them out until it is safe to do so.
- No intrusive works (drilling/knocking down of walls etc) are to be undertaken without the required asbestos checks by the station manager. If unsure, volunteers should seek the advice of the station manager.

Accidents can happen

The main concern of Northern will not be to apportion blame but to ensure we have the details of how the accident happened and the extent of the injuries sustained. The local station manager has access to accident forms and will carry out an investigation if necessary to ensure we can put measures in place to prevent recurrence.

Your lead volunteer should have access to a basic first aid kit and be in possession of a mobile phone to call for assistance, this is especially relevant at unstaffed remote locations and this should be reflected in the simple risk assessment.

Our environment is your environment

Please ensure any water carried in cans and buckets is used sparingly and avoid hose pipes at all times, these create tripping hazards and do not regulate the amount of water used. They are also a burden upon the sustainability of that source of energy.

If you are using a water butt on or near the station, please be aware of the risks involved such as Legionella, Algae etc Please ensure that the butts are cleaned on a regular basis.

Avoid the burning of waste materials and the potential for excessive noise which may affect our neighbours. Please report any fly tipping or other environmental concerns including unauthorised car parking use to your Northern local manager. Your actions could be vital in avoiding escalating risk to our locations and car parking areas.

Looking after yourself and others

To protect yourself and the customers and colleagues of Northern we ask you to refrain from using solvents or chemicals on our stations unless this is with the prior written agreement of the station manager and is reflected in the local risk assessment.

Please be aware that slips, trips and falls are the number one cause of accidents on railway stations and we need you to think of others and ensure you have a tidy confined workspace free of tripping hazards at all times.

Your personal safety and security is important to Northern and would ask that all lone working is avoided by volunteers. You must be prepared to act under instruction from railway officials at all times and report any suspicious activities through the Crime Stoppers text facility or other means of communication as advised on local briefing.

Please remember not all trains are booked to stop at the location where you are volunteering. Express and freight trains can and should be expected at all times. You should be prepared by raising one arm, acknowledge the train horn and the local assessment may require a look out person

Risk Assessment

The following table illustrates some common hazards that you may face when working on Northern stations. In the table you'll also see control measures which you should adhere to in order to protect yourself and others from the hazards.

Columns A to E show what could happen (Hazard), who might be involved, how that hazard might occur, how likely that is to happen if you do nothing and how severe it could be for someone if it happened.

Column F shows what you could do about it to prevent the hazard arising and column G shows how likely it is to happen with those actions taken.

The table is not exhaustive and there may be other hazards, specific to the location on which you are working, which you may need to consider.

These should be done on Appendix A at the end of this document.



Safety and sustainability summary

Working at height should be avoided at all times. If the local manager is in agreement concerning a specific task this must be risk assessed and signed as adequate by that manager.

Power tools are to be treated in the same way and in risk assessed circumstances. No intrusive works are to be carried out until Northern Trains are satisfied that no asbestos containing materials will be exposed. All other tools used by the volunteers should be hand held and manual in operation.

Manual handling is simple and straight forward, so assess the load and share the load, always remember it is better to make an extra journey than pull a muscle.

Bio-diversity is often overlooked at our stations but we do have locations with species of snake, adders are quite common in areas around the mid Cumbrian coast line.

Nesting birds, crested newts and bats are also species we all need to be aware of the statutory legal protection and please report any sightings and take advice from Northern before commencing any work.

If you encounter bees nesting at the station, please do not disturb them. Consider them as co-workers and maintain a safe distance. Harmful chemicals should not be used. Please contact your RSCM for further information



A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Hazards	Who may be harmed?	Causation	Likelihood	Severity	Control Measures	Ranking L/M/H
Slips Trips Falls Our most common form of accident!	Volunteers	Uneven ground. New platform area at location. Untidy work area.	Low	Low	Appropriate non-slip footwear to be worn. No work to take place when frost is forecast or evident. Site method of work to be briefed and handbook information/instruction available for volunteers.	Low
	Customers	Trip hazards caused by stray tools on platforms	Low	Low	Work area confined to planters Completed work checked for hazards to customers on completion of each task	Low
Falling from height. Working from ladders must be avoided on every occasion.	Volunteers	Falls from raised planted areas or from the platform edge to track	Low	Low	Volunteer handbook states no work or walking near the platform edge. Work on planting in raised areas/embankments must be carried out with care and within an individual's capability.	Low
Danger from trains and track (won't apply e.g. next to the car park or outside the fence)	Volunteers	By straying onto track or slipping from platform edge onto line side.	Low	High	Northern safety briefings Volunteers will only go into the work area or authorised access route designated for the scheme by Northern. Volunteers will work facing the platform edge whenever within 2.5metres of it. Wearing high visibility vests.	Residual risk Medium
	General public	Reduced platform width by error.	Low	Medium	Minimum platform width to be maintained at all times. Clear warning signs around work area by volunteers.	Medium
Injury from hand gardening tools (applies to most schemes)	Volunteers	Improper use, cutting or striking	Low	Low	Safety gloves worn when using tools. User and others will regularly check everyone is clear of the arc of movement.	Low
Danger from road traffic (could include cars entering or leaving stations)	Volunteers	People not seeing cars; drivers not seeing volunteers	Medium	High	Volunteers will wear 'high visibility' tabards when working on the scheme Lead Volunteer will remind people of traffic hazard before work starts	Low

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Hazards	Who may be harmed?	Causation	Likelihood	Severity	Control Measures	Ranking L/M/H
Hazardous Volunteers rubbish (hypodermic needles, broken glass, human waste, other infectious waste)	Volunteers	Cuts and punctures to skin and infections to existing cuts.	Medium	High	Appropriate gloves and non-slip sturdy footwear Litter pickers used. Safety boots or walking boots worn. Check for hypodermics before entering undergrowth or moving rubbish. Hypodermics or human waste identified dealt with by Northern staff or Local Authority Environmental Health using 'sharps' containers or specialist equipment as appropriate. Supply of water and soap available for hand washing.	Residual Risk if control measures are followed Medium
Injury from strimmer, motor mower or power tools must be with written agreement with northern rail and assessed separately.	Volunteers and potential customer impact.	Falls from raised planted areas or from the platform edge to track.			Motor/power tools only used if agreed in advance by Northern and assessed as a specific task.	

Name of group		
Team leader		
Contact details	Email:	Phone:
Contact(s) compiling this risk assessment		
Staffed station Y/N	Example- Thatto Heath is staffed first train to last and a signing in facility and basic first aid kit are available on site.	
Area(s) of the station where you will working	Example - The newly acquired pots which have been procured from Merseytravel and secured into the concrete platform on the Liverpool bound side only. We will also carry out some weeding on the embankment at the rear of the platform	
Description of Scheme including who will take part, how many people will be on site at any one time and how you will get access.	<p>Example - The group will consist of three individuals one to act as a lookout and will stand in front of the platform office to warn the two planters of any trains coming in the direction of travel from St Helens. The team will gain access from the main road down to the platform from the slope which is step free and within the lease of the northern location.</p> <p>We will bring the flowers and grow bags from our car which will require a permit from the booking office and transport to the platform on our four wheeled manually operated trolley. We will keep the trolley and contents in a safe area four metres away from the platform edge and in sight of the lookout at all times. he planters will take whatever is required for the task in small easy to carry batches to contain manual handling to a minimum.</p>	
Will young people (under the age of 18) or people with special needs be involved? If so, how will you provide support and supervision?	Example - One of our volunteer group is wheelchair bound and this work allows Shelia to give something back to her community, it is where she grew up and used to catch the train to work from. Shelia will only be doing the planting of flowers in the tubs. The distance from the tubs to platform edge is 3.5 metres and the lookout is a secondary control measure. The initial control measure is the wheelchair will have the brake applied at all times.	

You should now complete the opposite table for the works to take place at the station. You are only assessing the risks additional to those general hazards found in the table above. Should you require any assistance or guidance on the completion of the table then please contact your Community and Sustainability Manager.



Name of group		
Team leader		
Contact details	Email:	Phone:
Contact(s) compiling this risk assessment		
Staffed station Y/N		
Area(s) of the station where you will working		
Description of Scheme including who will take part, how many people will be on site at any one time and how you will get access		
Will young people (under the age of 18) or people with special needs be involved? If so, how will you provide support and supervision?		



Record of Safety Briefing

This document records the safety briefings given as part of Northern’s station adoption scheme. By signing this document, group members are confirming that they have received and understood the briefing and have read the full safety briefing document. By signing, they are also confirming that they understand they will be excluded from the station adoption scheme, and any passes, safety equipment or other material issued by Northern as part of the scheme will be immediately returnable, if they fail to obey the instructions in the briefing or fail to obey the Code of Conduct.

Name of group	
Station(s) adopted:	
Name of person giving briefing (Northern):	
Signature of person giving briefing:	
Date of initial briefing:	
Name of group leader:	
Signature of group leader:	
Number of group volunteers:	

Surname	First Name	Date briefed	Briefed by

