



COSS Plus One and Low-Level Work Assessments

Richardson Rail has received an update from Network Rail regarding the COSS Plus one assessment. It has come to light that these assessments were used to obtain an easy and non-representative COSS assessment for the candidate, which may not have been the best time for them.

As a result of this update, Richardson Rail has taken steps to combat fabricated assessments, ensuring that assessments fully represent the candidates' abilities in line with their COSS competencies. This has been done by following additional guidance notices, communicating with the assurance organisation, and holding internal meetings. Richardson Rail will not undertake an assessment where the group consists of COSS Plus one other unless it is AP, NP or S&T Duties OR a formal dispensation is requested and approved. Even in such cases, the company and by extension, the assessor must undertake checks to prove that the assessment is representative of the candidate's competency usage or their typical workload.

This scope also applies to non-intrusive works (referred to as Low-Level jobs henceforth), which could carry the risk of being fabricated for the assessment. Sometimes, these two types of assessment and the associated risks will overlap and should be assessed for each risk.

Operationally Normal Examples (Non-Exhaustive)

- DC Isolations Level B Strapping
- DC Isolations Level B Switching
- AC Isolations OLE AP Strapping
- Detailed Structure Examinations Inc. Bridges etc. (Detailed means close-up inspections with tools. Just taking photos and observing is not suitable)
- Pre-scoping surveys (If supporting WPP and TBS is available only)
- Machine or Crane Controller



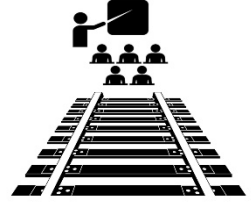
Roles We Do Not Consider Operationally Normal / Bad Practise (Non-Exhaustive)

- When undertaking duties defined as acting as a competent person, as these works only require IWA, they then pose the question of why a COSS is undertaking them. Some examples are placing Detonators for a PC or COSS, Placing TCODS and Keying a Signal.
- Level Crossing attendant
- Points operator
- Placing WSMBs for an ES (Unless project dispensation is granted)
- Letting a train into a worksite for an ES
- Letting a train into possessions for a PICOP
- Visual or Basic Visual examinations. (Any examination not supported by WPP / TBS identifying the required tools and equipment that is to be used)
- Any work where the amount of people has been increased from what would be normal, just to get a WPA done

Getting COSS Plus One Assessment Approved

Please note the following: If a company is involved in work that is bad practice according to our list, NWR's list, or our list of non-operationally standard roles, we will not assess it (excluding MC/CC as applicable).

However, if this work is the operational norm for the client's company, we can consider approving these job roles. This must be done by Richardson Rails' training manager receiving a letter (or email) from someone in a senior position within the client company's operational works hierarchy. The letter should detail why they want us to grant dispensation for these works, confirm that the works are operationally normal for the company, explain how the COSS Assessment will still accurately portray the candidate's ability as a COSS and in the



capacity that the candidate could use the competence in, and confirm if there are any contractual agreements for this work type to be done as COSS Plus one.

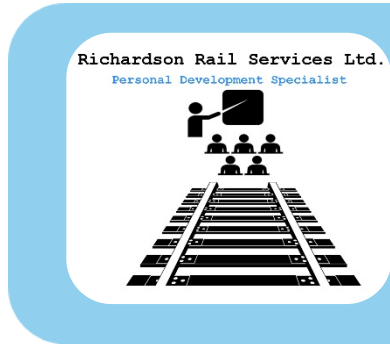
Only after the training manager has reviewed and agreed with this letter will a dispensation request be sent into NSAR for their approval.

After approval in each instance of an assessment being undertaken, the assessor must follow the flowchart below and be able to obtain confirmation and email evidence for retention.

Please note that dispensation requests are not generic. As such if you have been granted a dispensation on the work being assessed, but this was via a different provider, we cannot accept it.

Please leave at least ten working days' notice for dispensation approval, as it must go to NSAR.

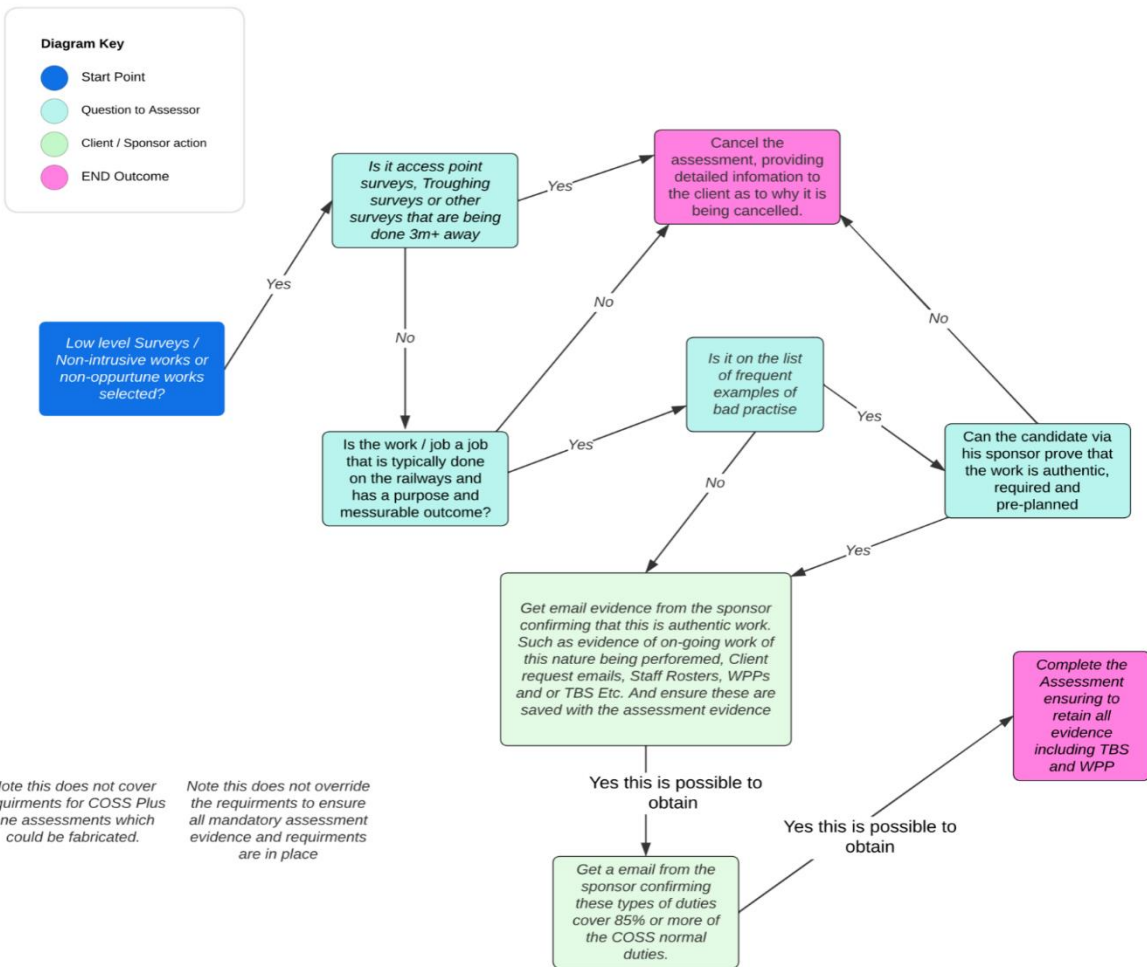
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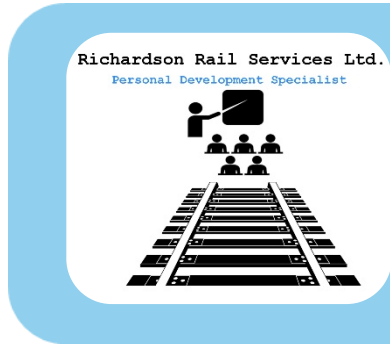


Low-Level Work Guidance Flow Chart (To be done in all cases even with dispensation)

Low Level COSS Job ASSESSMENT

Rhys Richardson, NEBOSH, GradIOSH, PWI, IRSE | June 28, 2023

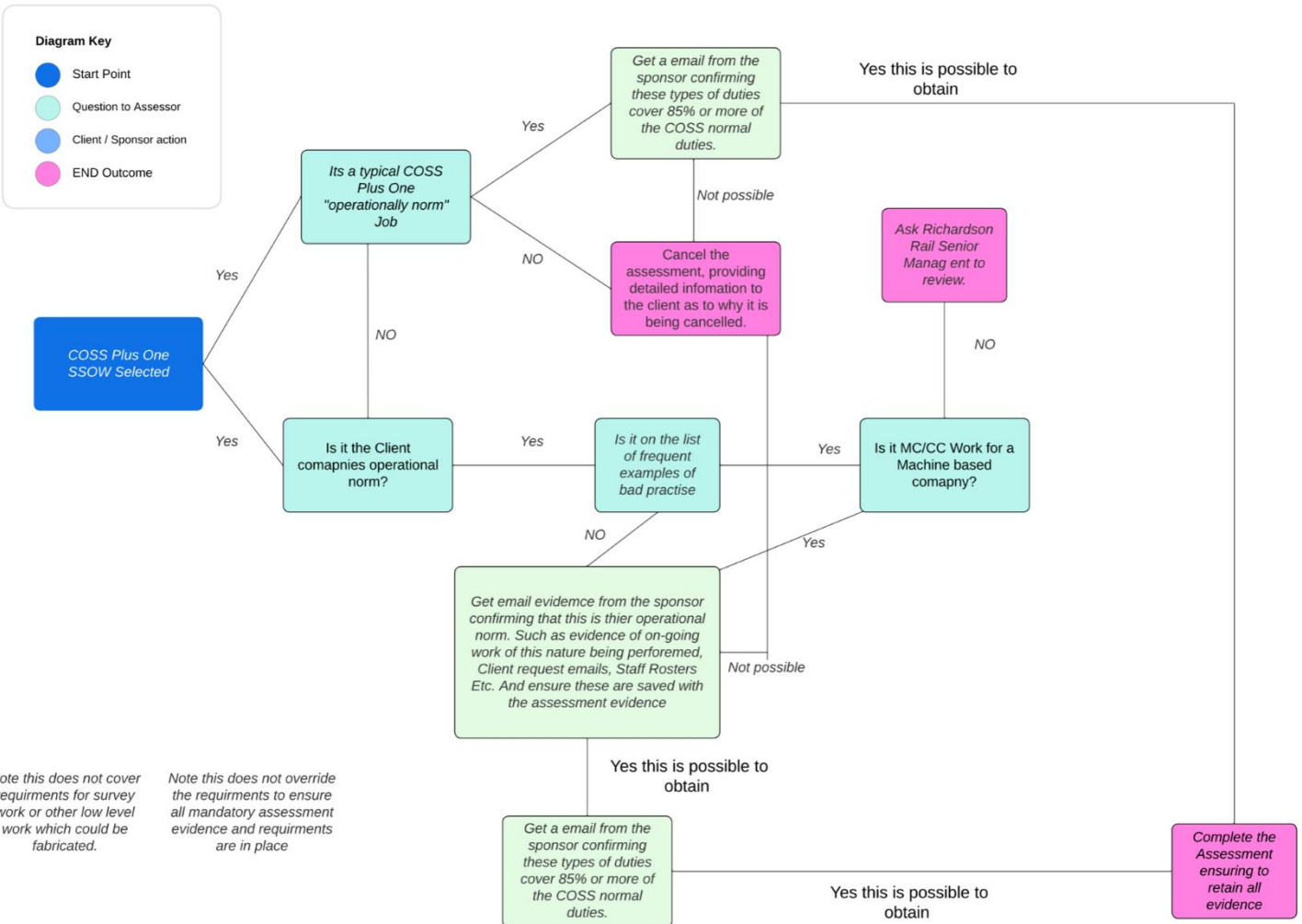




COSS Plus One Guidance Flowchart (To be done in all cases even with dispensation)

COSS PLUS ONE ASSESSMENT

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Note this does not cover requirements for survey work or other low level work which could be fabricated.

Note this does not override the requirements to ensure all mandatory assessment evidence and requirements are in place



COSS Assessment Location Confirmation

After discussions with NSAR, we have received confirmation that COSS Assessments and Network Rail's interpretation of the term 'operational infrastructure' encompasses all lines open to regular train or freight movements. This excludes unused or uncommission lines and construction sites. Moreover, it does not include sidings or depot lines (SoD).

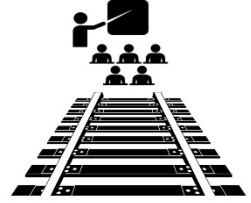
It's important to note that assessments may still apply to lines adjacent to mainlines and may include some siding lines, but a full assessment should not be conducted exclusively on SoD lines.

Therefore, when discussing the pre-assessment plan with candidates, it is crucial to ensure that their work is on a main line, indicated by a solid black line on the sectional appendix (refer to Figure one). We should not receive documents to verify this; COSS candidates are expected to understand signal, track, and sectional appendix diagrams to verify this information independently.

If, upon arrival, the assessment location proves unsuitable, the assessment must not commence, if it did the assessment would be deemed invalid.

Additionally, assessments cannot be conducted on construction sites where the line is not considered to be in operation (distinct from worksites or possessions). This guidance is derived from NSAR's examples provided in their communications.

"I have had a similar situation recently where an individual had a COSS Workplace Assessment undertaken on a construction project that was almost ready for handover, all of the infrastructure and paperwork was present and correct but the line was not operational and was only open to engineering train movements.



The Training Provider in question contacted me after conducting the assessment to ask whether it was valid. Network Rail's Technical Authority and Competence Owner deemed that the assessment was NOT valid and that the individual in question should be re-assessed on operational infrastructure at the earliest opportunity."

-NSAR Internal Compliance & Delivery Manager

Please note that any assessment being cancelled due to these arrangements would still be chargeable to the client as they are expected to know the requirements of the assessment from the JI's and readily available requirements in our terms and website.

Please also let us know ASAP if you hear of other providers completing assessments on Siding or depot lines so we can inform them of the requirements.

A dispensation request for on-going siding or depot COSS assessments to be undertaken can be made, please see the COSS Plus one guidance area for how to do this.

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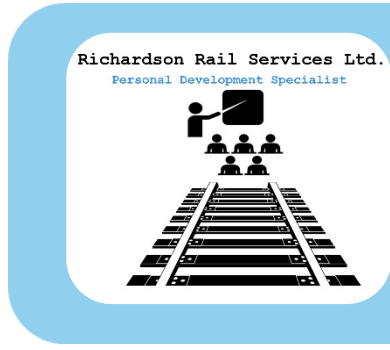
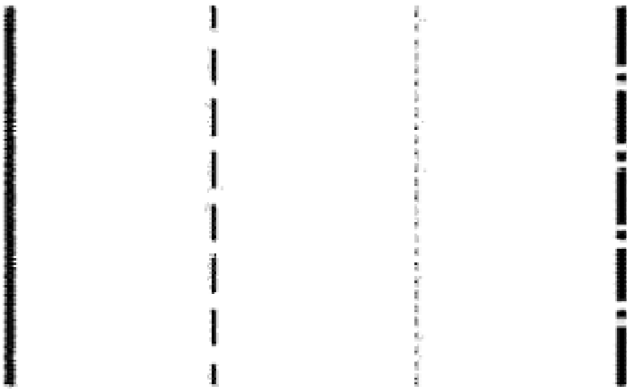


Figure One – Sectional appendix key sample



Passenger line

Goods line

Siding

Running line not controlled by Network Rail

The only time deviation from the above can be done, is when NSAR have explicitly given written formal dispensation.

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