

Rule book management in a harmonised railway s

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Summary

How we did the change from a national rule book, with the NSA as the responsible publisher, to a rule book, used by everyone but with the major IM as the publisher. How this was organised, how we will work together with the sector in the future. What benefits are there in a joint work with operational rules? What obstacles have did we have to handle in the process? What are the lessons we have learned and where are we going from here?

Vocabulary

Trafikverket – The Swedish Transport administration

TTJ – Trafikverkets Trafikbestämmelser för järnväg – Trafikverkets Operational rules – Rail, i. e. the Rule book

FRI - Fora for common risk management of rail safety risks

BTO - the Association of Train Operating Companies

FSJ - the Swedish Association of Railway Contractors

TTJ Advisory board - supports the Swedish Transport Administration in the strategic management and development of the rules

1. Background

1.1. The Swedish railway today, actors and fundamental responsibilities.

The structure of the railway sector in Sweden has become one of the most deregulated in Europe. It started in 1988 when a structural reform resulted in the creation of a separate Infrastructure manager (Banverket – Swedish Rail Administration) and a Railway Undertaker (SJ). Both organisations were controlled directly by the Swedish government, but with two different roles.

During the last 15 years the market has gone through a significant evolution with the rise of a number of new RU:s, both domestic and international. Furthermore, the responsibility for the infrastructure is no longer only a case for Trafikverket (the successor of Banverket), but a number of IM:s who are in charge of different parts of the network, although Trafikverket still is the largest of them all.

In 2009 the Transport Agency (Swedish NSA) took over the responsibility for the National Rule Book from Banverket. The event also marked the ending of an extensive project which had developed a completely new rule book with the intent to be more suited for the new structure of independent IM:s and RU:s.

A few years later the NSA concluded that it was no longer appropriate for them to manage the rule book.

1.2. The industry still needs a rule book

When the decision came that the Transport Agency would no longer publish the rule book, it did not take long to realise that the industries need of common operational rules not is less even if the rule book is abolished by the NSA. When the Transport Agency announced that it was no longer going to publish the operational rule book, an intensive period started. There were many contacts between the different stakeholders and Trafikverket during a long period. Some fundamentals and principles was agreed on for the work to be done.

- Every actor is responsible for the risks that their business might create.
- There can only be one unique set of rules that are applicable to all actors on the infrastructure.
- The IM are the only actor who has the possibility to establish a these joint set of rules.
- It is desirable that the rules are consistent for all the railways in Sweden.
- The only possible candidate to manage the “new” rule book with an organisation large enough, is Trafikverket

This work ended in the decision that the best solution is that as the major IM Trafikverket was to take the lead in this. Apart from the need to coordinate the work on our own infrastructure and our “own“ rule book, for our own infrastructure, there is also a need to coordinate with adjacent infrastructure, train operation companies and others working on and adjacent to our railway lines.

But it is also important to realise that the operational rules has a great impact on the business of the different railway undertakings and therefor it is necessary to do this work jointly. It also means that operators, infrastructure managers and railway undertakings, need to ensure that there are additional rules that guarantee a good safety. In other words – the Swedish railway still needs a common regulatory framework for the operation of the railway.

The coordination of this is an ongoing work. All the major infrastructure managers in Sweden have stated that they will use the Transport Administrations regulations as the basis for their own rule book. Thus, we have a common rule book for all the major parts of the Swedish rail infrastructure, regardless who the infrastructure manager is.

2. Defining the key processes

The object of the rule book is to create good conditions for sufficient safety. In addition, the safety rules affect the railway's productivity and cost competitiveness. This fact is an important foundation for the management work.

The legislation states that the common risks should be managed jointly. It follows, from the regulatory point of view, that the regulations must be managed with both an internal and external perspective.

Each concerned part is responsible for the aggregation of experiences from the current regulations and the implementation of changes. The rule book is part of the Transport Administration's requirements for the operation of the state rail network. The rule book will therefore contain the elements that are the responsibility of the infrastructure manager to publish.

With that decision follows that it is the Transport administration that holds the decisions concerning regulatory content and changes of the same, however, we do that after consultation and collaboration with the affected railway industry.

2.1. Some key elements and principles to the task

An “advisory board” with participants from the Swedish Transport Administration, other infrastructure managers, the Association of Train Operating Companies (BTO) and the Swedish Association of Railway Contractors (FSJ) have been created. They meet four times per year. The main task for this group is to support the Swedish Transport Administration in the strategic management and development of the rules.

The Advisory board is to contribute in the development of the rules by:

- Prioritize among the different requests for change that arises
- Initiate strategic development that is not driven from “ground floor”
- Allocate resources in to working groups

For each year, a working plan is proposed with the major issues that need to be addressed in the upcoming year. The plan is then determined by the Transport Administration, and the work to be done (according to the plan) is managed and lead by the rule book management.

2.2. Fora for common risk management rail safety risks - "FRI"

The advisory board have a close relationship with FRI and reports are submitted regularly to this collaborative forum.

2.3. Proposals for change

Previously, anyone could submit comments and proposals of change directly to the Transport Agency, there were no requirements on the form or content. That model is now replaced with the following approach:

- A head of safety, may submit proposals of change to the rule book management.
- Any proposals submitted must contain at least documented descriptions of the reasons, motives and risks that justifies the proposal.
- If needed the rule book management can give support when preparing the proposal (but not do the work itself)
- The rule book management then prepares the proposal further, including taking it to the advisory board for

By using the above scheme better conditions for an orderly change work is introduced.

The same procedure is set for deviations and waivers.

The decision of change is “owned” by the Transport Administration.

3. Planning process

There are several drivers for changes to the Rule Book. They are

- Risks
- Adaption to changes in the system
- Adaption to changes in processes
- The ongoing development of a harmonized set of rules within the European Union

As previously mentioned a large amount of work was done before handling the rule book over to the NSA. The “old” rule book was modernized and adapted to the processes in the rail system. It was also divided into the different traffic systems, but with some parts covering all of the system (I e terms, accident handling, etc.)

When the new rule book was developed during the early years of 2000, a large amount of effort was also put into making it reasonable and easy to follow. Now the needs is more about adapting the rules to the risks we face in our modern deregulated railway.

The advisory board is the major bench marketing partner in this matter. They are also a reference in matters of rule book changes and proposed rule changes.

The rule book management does an annual review of, for example, accident investigations and risk analyses that may be of interest for regulatory management. But it is also a responsibility of the participants of the Advisory board to analyse their own accident investigations and risk assessments to see if any trend shows a need to change the rules.

4. The acknowledgement of rules

The infrastructure manager Trafikverket requires that the railway companies and contractors must use the operational rules. This is done through agreements, contracts and conditions in the network statement. Changes in the rules can enter into force on two occasions per year. The regular moment is in connection with the change of the timetable in December. The second (optional) occasion is during April / May and can be decided in the annual plan (if needed).

The decisions must be taken with a foresight that is sufficient relative to the needs of systematic implementations. The need for implementation time is determined from case to case and depends among other things on the size and the complexity of the change.

5. Prioritizing and resources

Basically Trafikverket is responsible for running the daily management and development of the rule book. This also implicate that they finance and puts resources into the development work deemed urgent. Other actors are involved in the ongoing management work on a voluntary basis and within the framework of their respective operating conditions.

It is important that when situations arise where individual companies see great value in a rule change, and they must be prepared to take a much greater responsibility for such a development by providing resources in terms of expertise and / or funding.

6. The value of a strategic roadmap and strategic goals

For the administration of the rule book it is important to have a strategic plan, and to know where we are going with the rule book. Each year, in conjunction with the Advisory boards December meeting, the strategic plan is updated and evaluated in conjunction with the

establishment of the next year's business plan. It is the Transport Authority responsibility that this is done.

6.1. The Strategic plan/work plan for 2016 includes

- Rules to protect the driver at unexpected stops where he/she needs to leave the train
- Authorized passage of a signal at full stop – is there anything we can do to ease the process without making the hazard greater? The first task being to identify the rules that exist today about this and how they work in practice.
- The “unwritten” fundamental rules - Gather the background material that can be found and is available, evaluate it and write a document that presents the principles and background to the current rules.

7. Experiences along the road to the “new” rule book and main challenges for the future

Of course we have encountered problems along the way. But not necessarily the ones we originally thought would occur.

One of the major problems along the way the implementation of the new rule book was that the Transport Administration "framework" document had no room for documents that looked different from a word document. The Rule book that we are responsible for is designed to make it as easy as possible for the user to understand and absorb. It is created in InDesign and not a word-document, and is published as PDF files on our website.

It took about six months to get as much acceptance for its appearance and need for publication as it is, to enable us to move on. The official decision came just weeks before the publication would take place.

However, the collaboration with the industry have exceeded our expectations and there is now a mutual understanding of each other's needs, which bodes well for future cooperation.

At the moment we have joint working groups tackling issues such as

- how can we better protect engine drivers and train crews when they need to leave the train at unexpected stops?
- is it possible to divide the rule book between the IM and the RU?
- why do we have the rules we do and what are the basic principles we need to take into account if and when we want to change a rule?

7.1. What do we see in the future?

One of the major tasks for the rule book management in all is to prepare the adjustment of the rules in parallel to the development of TSI Operations.

The development of the TSI;s gives that we in the future will need to look further into how the rule book (or the responsibility for) needs to be divided between the different stakeholders. But we hope to be able to still do it together, the left hand needs to know what the right is doing, and not least, how it is done.

We have decided on a model where we do the work needed together with the rest of the industry, but, and one of the already identified problems is, that the regrowth in safety and regulatory knowledgeable staff have not been the best. So we need to keep a slow and steady pace onward. We hope that all the involved parties can actually see the development and work with the rule book as a chance of introducing new (and perhaps a bit younger) staff to the rule work.



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