

Australian Standard™

**Railway safety management**

**Part 7: Railway safety investigation**



This Australian Standard was prepared by Committee ME-079, Railway Safety. It was approved on behalf of the Council of Standards Australia on 8 December 2005. This Standard was published on 5 January 2006.

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The following are represented on Committee ME-079:

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Australasian Railway Association  
Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry  
Australian Transport Safety Bureau  
Commonwealth Department of Transport and Regional Services  
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## **Railway safety management**

### **Part 7: Railway safety investigation**

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## PREFACE

This Standard was prepared by the Standards Australia Committee ME-079, Railway Safety to supersede AS 5022—2001, *Guidelines for railway safety investigation*. It has been renumbered AS 4292.7 and is now one of a series of Standards as follows:

## AS

4292	Railway safety management
4292.1	Part 1: General requirements
4292.2	Part 2: Track, civil and electrical infrastructure
4292.3	Part 3: Rolling stock
4292.4	Part 4: Signalling and telecommunications systems and equipment
4292.5	Part 5: Operational systems
4292.7	Part 7: Railway safety investigation (this Standard)

The Standard has been revised and upgraded in a number of respects, aimed at providing more definitive requirements for those activities which experience shows are vital to the investigation process, and eliminating those which are of doubtful value. The principal changes from the previous edition are as follows:

- (a) The Standard now contains normative requirements. The superseded Standard comprised guidelines only.
- (b) The number of severity levels has been reduced from 5 to 4 and the reporting requirements at each level more clearly defined.
- (c) Reference is made to more detailed guidelines on the conduct of investigations in the National Code of Practice.
- (d) Management review and close-out requirements have been added.

The terms 'normative' and 'informative' have been used in this Standard to define the application of the appendix to which they apply. A 'normative' appendix is an integral part of a Standard, whereas an 'informative' appendix is only for information and guidance.

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## FOREWORD

The requirements specified in this document for investigating an occurrence has as its primary objective the enhancement of safety through the discovery of any systemic problems and deficiencies which may have led to the occurrence, or any latent safety issues the investigation might reveal. As such, it needs to be clearly differentiated from other kinds of investigation that might arise from the same occurrence, such as police, OHS authority and coronial investigations.

It is important that in order to meet the kind of objective set out above, the investigation is designed to support a ‘just culture’ approach. The use of investigative techniques based on this approach has demonstrated that if the threat of sanctions or criticism against individuals or organizations is substantially removed, the investigation will proceed in a minimum stress environment and is more likely to get to the facts of the matter and to identify strategies for safety improvement. The term ‘just culture’ is further explained in Clause 1.7(a).

Two particular aspects are important in achieving this end. Firstly, the procedure envisages that a measure of confidentiality for participants giving evidence will be maintained such that, although records of the names of people involved are kept, they would not be referred to in the final report, except by their generic position in the organization if that were necessary. The second important aspect is that the report does not make any statements of blame, except in a clear case of negligence, or offer prescriptive solutions. The report would show factual information, analyses and conclusions together with a listing of safety actions (see Clause 1.5.5) which have been addressed or which need to be brought to the attention of the responsible authority, and would leave the determination of remedial action to others.

Despite the foregoing, users of this Standard should be aware that the contents of the report may be drawn upon by police, coronial or other authority investigators. The degree to which the information can be used in those types of investigation will depend on the amount of legal protection available in the particular jurisdiction.

## STANDARDS AUSTRALIA

### Australian Standard Railway safety management

#### Part 7: Railway safety investigation

## SECTION 1 SCOPE AND GENERAL

### 1.1 SCOPE

This Standard specifies requirements for investigating railway safety occurrences so as to enable subsequent corrective action to be taken to manage the safety risk and to prevent a recurrence. The requirements cover the setting of terms of reference, conduct of the investigation, the development of conclusions, the identification of safety actions, the presentation of reports, the management review of reports and the close-out of safety actions. The Standard does **not** address the determination of remedial action or formulating prescriptive solutions arising from a report.

NOTE: It is not intended to inhibit emergency reporting during the investigation, of a safety issue requiring urgent attention, even though this might imply a recommendation that remedial action be taken.

### 1.2 OBJECTIVE

The objective of this Standard is to provide the railway industry with a consistent approach to initiating, conducting and reporting on an investigation into a railway occurrence with a view to identifying safety deficiencies.

### 1.3 APPLICATION

This Standard applies to the entire railway industry regardless of the size or function of organizations.

### 1.4 REFERENCED DOCUMENTS

The following documents are referred to in this Standard:

AS  
4292          Railway safety management  
4292.1        Part 1: General requirements

AS/NZS  
4360          Risk management

National Code of Practice for Australian Rail Operations: Rail Investigations\*

### 1.5 DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Standard the definitions in AS 4292.1 and the following apply:

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\* In preparation at time of issue of this Standard.