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LINESIDE NOTICES (1)

by John Jesson

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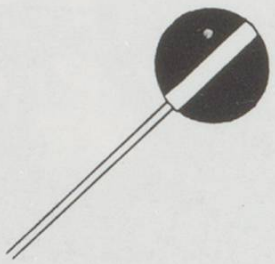
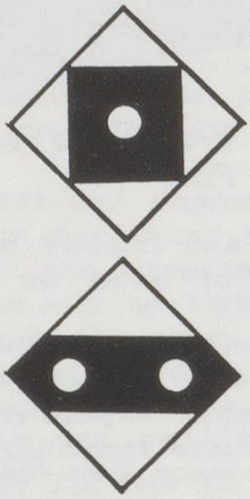
Compulsory STOP signals



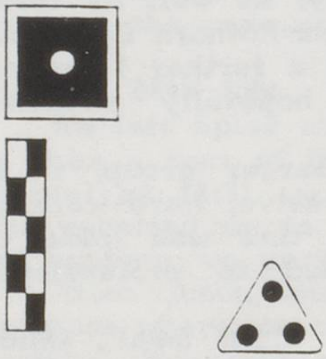
Portable STOP signs take the form of a red disc with a white bar by day. At night a red lamp is hung from the disc.
This signal is used whenever it is necessary to prevent movement over a piece of line, at turntables and traversers, at weighbridges and at the ends of sidings.

Request station stop signals



At unstaffed halts, a passenger operated flashing light is located at the braking distance from the halt. The original type consists of a single white light with a square black surround on a larger white diamond-shaped background whilst the later type (GFM and others) has two alternately flashing white lights on a black bar on a white diamond.
If the lights are not flashing, no-one wishes to join the train. The lights can be reset by the train conductor.

Automatic level crossing signals

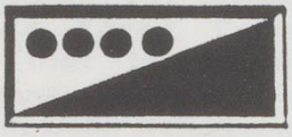


The correct functioning of automatic level crossing equipment is indicated by an orange flashing light positioned at braking distance from the crossing. A black/white chequer board assists identification of the signal.
On lines where the permitted speed is greater than 70 km/h, an additional marker is placed in advance off the flashing signal. This consists of a triangular white board with three black spots.

Whistle board

The whistle indicator is a black/white board positioned in advance of the place requiring an audible warning. This is usually a level crossing, but is also used in other locations.

If there is a restriction on the time of day when the instruction applies, this is shown on the board. If the instruction applies to only particular trains, such as non stopping trains, this is shown below the board.



A curiosity, which has now disappeared, was the whistle board approaching the station at La Givrine, on the NStCM. The four black spots meant "Whistle four times if the baggage car carries supplies for the station restaurant".

Axle number & Train length boards

At some locations marker boards, showing either a number of axles or a train length, indicate where the front of a train corresponding to the indicated length should be halted. Longer trains, or trains with more than one locomotive , may pass the board by the length by which the train exceeds the indicated length, whilst shorter trains stop before reaching the board. A series of boards carrying different lengths simplifies the process.

The marker boards are white, edged black, with black letters/numbers and are "coned". A similar marker showing the letters SNCF was used in 1980 during the trials of French double-deck stock. The Zurich area has boards marked 1,2 or 3 to indicate the stopping point of S-Bahn trains formed of DPZ stock.

Rack rail signs

The beginning of a rack section is preceded at a distance of about 150m by a square white board with black numerals, giving the speed allowed on that section. The beginning of the rack rail is marked by a round white board with a black letter A (C in French-speaking areas), and the end of the rack rail by a similar board with the letter E (F in French).

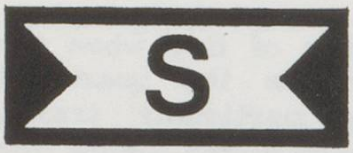
The two indications are usually on opposite sides of the same post.

Snow clearing indicator

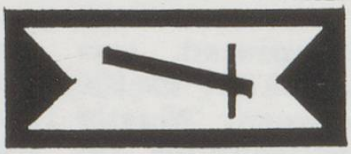
This is positioned a short distance ahead of an obstruction for which the snowplough blade must be lifted. At long obstructions, such as level crossings, indicators can be placed at the beginning and end of the obstruction. It is normally black, but can also be yellow/black, yellow, red or simply rusty.

Indicators of train protection equipment

The location of lineside equipment for train protection will be marked with a black/white board:



a) if the train magnet (manufactured by Signum) is positioned more than 50m from its associated signal. Some railways (eg BOB) show just M (for Magnet)



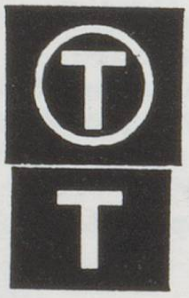
b) where there is equipment serving to operate flashing light and barrier equipment.

c) if the protection equipment operates speed monitoring equipment.

This sign is used in front of, or at an advanced or combined signal when a warning in the driver's cab may be sounded if, for example, a divergence in accordance with train working regulations is called for.

Transit Signal

The Transit signal consists of a white T on a black board, surmounted by an electric version which can be unlit, lit or flashing. It is used at signals and at stations with remote control or route locking where it indicates that instructions should be obtained before proceeding. In tunnels, the board can be fixed to the tunnel wall.



When the upper indicator is unlit, the station is staffed.
When the upper indicator shows a steadily lit T the station is unstaffed.
When the upper indicator shows a flashing T the crew of a stopped train must call the signalman.
Transit signals are normally positioned near to the entry signal, at the middle of a platform (showing in both directions) and, providing that local conditions require it, in close proximity to the departure signal.

Telephone call signal

Stations without Transit signals or block posts may be provided with a telephone call signal. Similar to the electric lamp of a Transit signal, these signals carry a white triangular indicator. A flashing T instructs train personel to use the nearby signal telephone.
When unlit, the signal has no meaning ◘

To be continued