

PCMRSG FAQ's

1. Why can't we continue to work with HSG 216?

HSG 216 is no longer supported by HSE or available from any Government department. The principles in the document remain sound. Some links and references in the document are out of date.

2. If HSG 216 has been withdrawn by HSE what do we refer to until the new guidance is published?

HSG 216 has been withdrawn however it is still regarded as good practice so operators of passenger carrying miniature railways should continue to work with its guidance until a new document is available.

3. Why is there a need for a new guidance document?

The HSE still regard HSG216 as good practice, and recommend councils to refer to it when involved in an investigation at a miniature railway. The HSE are concerned that the guidance contained in the document does not always reflect current health and safety practice and that many of the references and links are out of date. They have encouraged hobbyists and commercial operators to provide a new guidance framework which, if produced in HSE style, should get their endorsement.

4. Who decides which participants are included in the Passenger Carrying Miniature Railway Safety Group?

The Model Engineering Liaison Group (MELG) have for some time been the hobby's representatives looking at how legislation affects the hobby.

The Terms of Reference for MELG, endorsed by Southern Federation of Model Engineering Societies, Northern Association of Model Engineers, Midland Federation of Model Engineers, 10¼" Gauge Railway Society, 7¼" Gauge Society, Gauge 1 Model Railway Association and Association of 16mm Narrow Gauge Modellers, put the members of MELG in the spotlight to draw together a specialist group, the Passenger Carrying Miniature Railway Safety Group (PCMRSG) to produce the new guidance.

The Passenger Carrying Miniature Railway Safety Group is currently formed with representatives from;

10¼" Gauge Railway Society
7¼" Gauge Society
Britain's Great Little Railways
Midland Federation of Model Engineers
Miniature railway equipment manufacturers/suppliers
National Railway Museum
Northern Association of Model Engineers
Southern Federation of Model Engineering Societies
The Heywood Society

6. What criteria is used to determine the inclusion of these participants?

At this stage PCMRSG is seeking to involve nationally recognised organisations who themselves set standards or provide guidance to their membership on railway construction and/or operation.

7. If there are recommendations to be made, how are they voted on?.

The HSE require demonstration of 'broad acceptance' of any guidance document produced outside of the HSE. Therefore the operators of miniature railways, whether hobbyists or commercial concerns, will be given the opportunity to review and comment on the draft document.

A dedicated website has been set up (see FAQ 10 for further information) and distribution of the draft document by the PCMRSG representatives to their members and/or through a number of seminars around the country, or perhaps all of these, are options being considered.

For the new guidance to be universally adopted by railway operators, they must be given adequate opportunity to review and comment.

8. When joining the group, are the manufacturers precluded from making and selling equipment that they may have been party to recommending?

The guidance will be non-prescriptive in providing solutions, so there will not be an opportunity for any manufacturer to promote their products. The HSE style of guidance documents is to set out what must be achieved in terms of safety, not to say how it should be done.

The supplier representation on PCMRSG have railway operating experience and contacts around the country with the commercial, professional operators of miniature railways, and we must remember that this document will cover them too. They also bring a wealth of experience on what is done in other countries.

9. What happens if we do not agree with a particular requirement of the document?

Guidance documents are written entirely in terms of what must be achieved in terms of safety, not how to do it. The document will not be prescriptive in providing solutions but state what must be achieved and provide lists (non-exhaustive) of considerations.

10. How can we comment or contribute to the document?

A website dedicated to the new guidance has been established, where a copy of the draft document will be available as soon as it is ready.

The website will also contain other relevant information and a link to submit comments and suggestions

The website is www.pcmrsg.org

11. When will the new guidance be available?

A draft document will be available on the website in the Spring of 2018. There will then follow a period of consultation with stakeholders and the expectation is for the final document to be published by the end of 2018.