



Operational Competency Manager

Position Description – RSAS

Team:	Engineering & Asset Services - QA	Location:	Auckland, Palmerston North, Wellington, Christchurch
Reports to:	Quality and Compliance Leader, RSAS		
Role Type:	Permanent		

About Us

KiwiRail’s Role in Aotearoa, New Zealand

KiwiRail, a proud State-Owned Enterprise, delivers sustainable and inclusive growth for our customers, communities, and people.

For more than 150 years, rail in New Zealand has connected communities, delivered freight and passengers around the country, and showcased our spectacular scenery to the world. Our purpose—Hononga Whaikaha, Oranga mo Aotearoa (Stronger Connections, Better New Zealand)—speaks to connection with our customers and the future needs of their businesses, connection with the communities we serve and operate in, and connection with each other. KiwiRail is carrying this legacy into the future, delivering connected rail and shipping transport services that create economic, social, and environmental value for New Zealand and New Zealanders.

Our Workplace

At KiwiRail, our values define the behaviour we expect from everyone. We have a team of over 4500 people, and every connection we make with each other, our union partners, our customers and all our stakeholders must be of the highest standard.



Safety, health, and well-being are our number one priority, ensuring our people return home safe and healthy every day.

About the Role

Purpose of the role

KiwiRail is in a phase of significant transformation to modernise and grow our rail and Interislander ferry services in Aotearoa.

The Operational Competency Manager supports KiwiRail's Rolling Stock Asset Services (RSAS) teams nationwide by ensuring safe and compliant rail operational environments, practices and processes. The role provides rail operating technical assurance, coaching, and oversight to frontline teams, helping them meet regulatory obligations and assurance that rail operations are being conducted within KiwiRail's safety framework. It plays a key part in promoting continuous improvement and embedding a strong safety culture across RSAS sites.

Key Accountabilities

Within the area of responsibility, this role is required to:

- Lead and deliver operational audits and mastery assessments to ensure compliance with safety-critical standards.
- Provide technical advice and support for incident investigations and follow-up actions.
- Monitor and improve observation systems to assess and enhance operating practices.
- Coach and mentor RSAS operators, minders, and safety observers to build capability and confidence.
- Promote Zero Harm behaviours and ensure safety findings are reported and actioned.
- Support RSAS leaders in applying safe, efficient practices and rail operating sites, and implementing corrective actions.

Key challenges

- Ensuring consistent safety standards across geographically dispersed RSAS sites with varied operational contexts.
- Influencing behavioural change and continuous improvement in high-risk environments.
- Balancing regulatory compliance with operational efficiency and frontline engagement.

Key Relationships Here are the key relationships relevant to this role		Manage /Lead	Deliver to	Collaborate with	Advise or inform
Internal	RSAS Front-Line Teams and Leadership		✓	✓	✓
	Operations OCMs			✓	
	Learning and Development			✓	✓
	Zero Harm			✓	✓
External	Rail & Maritime Transport Union			✓	✓
	Telarc				✓
	NZ Transport Agency (NZTA)				✓

What you will do to contribute

Health Safety and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead safety conversations and coach teams to identify and mitigate hazards. • Ensure compliance with Zero Harm principles and KiwiRail safety frameworks. • Provide technical support for incident investigations and safety audits. • Champion a proactive safety culture across RSAS teams. • Monitor and report safety findings through ORA systems.
Customer Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with RSAS teams to understand operational needs and improve service delivery. • Promote practices that enhance safety and reliability for internal and external customers. • Support continuous learning to meet customer expectations and regulatory standards. • Encourage feedback and collaboration to improve frontline operations.
High Performing Teams Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach and mentor team members to build observation and feedback skills. • Foster collaboration and shared accountability for safety and performance. • Promote HPHE principles in all workforce interactions. • Support team development through mastery testing and revalidation processes.
Commercial Acumen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify opportunities to reduce operational incidents and improve cost efficiency. • Support the adoption of new technologies that enhance safety and performance. • Provide insights into operational risks and recommend cost-effective solutions. • Ensure practices align with KiwiRail's business objectives and regulatory obligations.
Other Role Relevant Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct site visits to assess operational competency and provide assurance. • Deliver training and support for newly qualified operators and assessors. • Lead improvement initiatives and share best practices across RSAS locations. • Maintain strong relationships with compliance bodies and union representatives.

Decision Making

The position is accountable for decisions regarding all project operational objectives and for the provision of advice to project team members and relevant stakeholders on day to day operational decisions.

Key decision-making requirements of the position include:

- safety assurance, competency assessments, and incident investigations.
- expert advice to RSAS leaders and operators on safe practices and compliance requirements.

Human Resources Delegations	Nil
Direct reports	Nil
Finance Delegations	Nil
Budget (operating and capital)	Nil
Travel Delegations	Nil
Statutory powers	Nil

Physical demands and the nature of work

This role is a mix of front-line operational and administrative activities and requires:

- prolonged sitting and high computer usage
- walking, standing, twisting, bending (at the waist), crouching (bend knee)
- carrying of laptop and paperwork when alternating between home and office
- travel to various RSAS sites
- observation, recording and direction in the rail operating environment.

Your role may include other tasks suited to your level, as your manager directs. This job description shows your current duties. We'll review and update it with you if your responsibilities change.

About you

Knowledge and experience

- You have 5+ years of experience in rail operations, with a strong understanding of safety codes and practices.
- You're experienced in mentoring and assessing operational staff in high-risk environments.
- You're confident using Microsoft Office tools and writing clear, concise reports.
- You're skilled in conducting incident investigations and implementing preventative actions.
- You understand KiwiRail's regulatory obligations and safety frameworks.

Ways of working / Work-related qualities

- You lead your team to identify and address safety hazards, demonstrating care for their wellbeing.
- You speak with enthusiasm and tailor your messages to suit different audiences.
- You take ownership of team goals, pushing for high standards and fostering a results-driven environment.
- You promote collaboration and continuous learning within your team.
- You evaluate data thoroughly, making informed decisions that benefit the team and organisation.

Other Requirements

- You can pass regular drug and alcohol screenings.
- You hold a current and valid NZ driver's licence.
- You are willing to travel across New Zealand and work at various RSAS sites.
- You can operate a two-way radio and meet Medical Category 2 requirements.

Qualifications

- You are certified (or progressing towards certification) as an assessor.
- You hold or are working towards an adult teaching certificate, or have equivalent experience.

