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## **CIRCULAR NO. M-12**

Recommended Practice: Blue Flag Guide for Mechanical  
Employees

Effective: April 1, 2010



These procedures are recommended for Use on Railways operating in Canada

Workers must familiarize themselves with individual railway policies, as they may be more restrictive than these minimum requirements.

## 1. DEFINITIONS

“**blue flag**” means a blue flag by day or a blue light by night. The flag may be made of vinyl, metal, plastic, canvas or cloth;

“**person in charge**” means a person appointed by a railway company to ensure the safe conduct of an operation or the work of employees;

## 2. DESCRIPTION

A blue flag by day, or a combination of blue flag and blue light by night, displayed at one or both ends of equipment indicates that workers are working on or about such equipment. On a track which permits entry of a movement from one end only, a blue flag by day or blue light by night displayed between the equipment and the switch permitting entry is necessary.

## 3. COMPONENTS

- a) A blue flag by day, or a combination of blue flag and blue light by night, displayed at one or both ends of equipment.
- b) The lining away and locking of switches, or derails where provided, to prevent movement onto the track where work is being done.

**Note:** Workers must always exercise caution and be alert when working on or near the track, even when protection is in place. Protection must be provided by using a combination of the requirements of items (a) and (b) where practicable.

Exception: when repairs must be undertaken on a manned movement, the employee in charge of the locomotive must be notified before repair work is commenced. When so notified, the movement must not be moved, nor the brakes applied or released until the workers have advised that they are in the clear. When so protected blue flag protection is not required.



#### 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

The person in charge of the work is responsible for placing and removing Blue Flag Protection.

This person:

- Determines which switches must be lined away when practicable and where blue flags are required;
- Ensures that switches are lined away from the working track and personally locks the switches using a special personal lock when practicable;
- Erects the blue flag(s) between the switch(es) and cars or locomotives on the track, ensuring that the flags are properly positioned toward the centre of the track between the rails;
- Ensures that locomotives are immobilized according to company procedures;
- Where applicable, places derail in derailing position and locks; and
- Notifies all workers that will be working on the track that the Blue Flag Protection is in place.

This person removes Blue Flag Protection by:

- Notify all workers that were working on the track that the Blue Flag Protection will be removed;
- Removing blue flags and storing away properly;
- Unlocking switches (special lock where applicable);
- Where applicable, unlocking and placing derail in non-derailing position and re-locking; and
- Removing locomotive immobilization if applicable.

#### 5. RECOMMENDED BLUE FLAG SPECIFICATIONS

Blue flags shall be blue in color and clearly distinguishable from both sides.

Dimensions: The dimension of the blue flag should be a minimum of 14 inches by 10 inches.

Blue flag should be at a minimum height of eighteen inches from the top of the rail to the bottom of the flag

Maintenance: The blue flag must be maintained in good condition

When supported by a Risk Assessment and in accordance with company procedures and work instructions, new technologies, local conditions or operational improvements may dictate alternate requirements.