

# Conductor / Trainperson

Feb. 6, 2001

## **Overview**

The position of Conductor / Trainperson has three distinct classifications: Road Freight Conductor, Yard Switching and Passenger Service.

Railway operations run twenty four hours per day, seven days per week. Depending on seniority and preference, a Conductor may work exclusively in any one classification, or may work in each classification randomly from a spareboard as required on a "first in, first out" basis.

## **Road Freight Conductor**

### *Overview*

The Conductor occupies the freight train engine with the Locomotive Engineer. The Conductor is primarily responsible for the safe passage of the train from one point to the next by ensuring operating procedures are observed. The Conductor is also responsible for any switching, pick up and delivery of railcars at line points, and for any repairs to the train when trouble arises.

Freight trips typically require about 30 hours away from home, ten of which is spent at the away-from-home terminal.

The Conductor is exposed to low frequency, whole body vibration and ambient noise above 90 dB for periods of up to ten hours.

In order to complete or initiate a trip, it may be necessary to travel in a taxicab for periods of up to five hours.

On rare occasions, (approx. 5%) it may be necessary to walk alongside a stalled train on the shoulder of the right-of-way to diagnose and repair mechanical problems. Depending on the grade, it may be necessary to apply and later release many handbrakes (see yard switching duties below).

### *Essential Duties*

- Sitting for up to 10 hours
- Review operational and hazardous material documentation
- Regularly communicate operational requirements with locomotive engineer and others
- Record in writing and repeat operational requirements via radio
- Switching as required (see yard switching duties below)
- Repairs as required

## **Yard Switching**

### *Overview*

A yard switching crew consists of a two Trainpersons (Foremen and Helper) working with a Locomotive Engineer. Duties of the Foreman and Helper are identical; the yard foreman has the additional responsibility for determining the order of work.

Yard crews are responsible for the make-up and break-down of freight trains in a marshalling yard. Cars are placed in, or removed from a train according to destination.

Typically, yard crews have regular shifts, although start time and days off may not be traditional. Operations are carried out any time of day or night, in all weather conditions. At night, it is necessary to carry a switchlamp (approx. 1.5 kg). High (>90dB) peak and ambient noise is encountered. Ground conditions are generally level, but can be uneven. A yard crewperson may spend the entire shift standing or walking, although there may be an opportunity to sit on occasion.

Typically, yard crews forgo coffee and lunch breaks in exchange for a truncated work day of 5 to 6 hours. However, it is not unusual for yard crews to work 8 hours or more per shift.

In order to get cars from track to track, it is necessary to operate switches, separate one car from another by using the "operating lever", and secure cars by use of the handbrake wheel. Movements are controlled by radio communication with the Locomotive Engineer via a small portable radio.

To ensure safety, operational requirements and work procedures must be strictly observed.

### *Essential Duties*

- Get on and off equipment (moving or stationary)
- Operate track switches
- Radio communication
- Standing / walking for up to 5 hours
- Operate "operating lever" while cars are moving or stationary
- Couple train line air hoses
- Operate equipment handbrake wheel (moving or stationary)
- Read and interpret "switch lists"
- Align drawbars (couplers) May require lifting of >40kgs at waist height

## **Passenger Service**

### *Overview*

Typically the realm of the very senior trainperson, passenger service may be available as a spareboard or holiday relief assignment.

Passenger service trainpersons work in crews of one to three. The passenger Conductor has the same responsibilities as a road freight conductor, as well as the responsibility for ticket taking and money management. A passenger service baggageperson is responsible for ensuring baggage and mail is organized, picked up and dropped off at line points. The passenger service trainperson has the responsibility of ensuring passengers are let on and off the train at the appropriate stops. On a one or two person crew, these duties are shared.

Passenger service trips typically do not extend past midnight. However, work days from 9 to 15 hours are the norm.

### *Essential Duties (Conductor)*

- Operational responsibilities (See Road Freight Conductor above)
- Passenger liaison
- Ticket taking and money management
- Walking the length of the train

### *Essential Duties (Baggage)*

- Operational responsibilities (See Road Freight Conductor above)
- Stack and organize, baggage and mail (up to 30 kgs)
- Deliver and pick up baggage and mail at line points
- Record pick up and delivery of baggage and mail
- High ambient noise (>90dB peak)

### *Essential Duties (Trainperson)*

- Operational responsibilities (See Road Freight Conductor above)
- Passenger liaison
- Determine line points for passenger pick up and drop off
- Assist passengers to entrain / detrain (requires the placement of a step-stool on the ground)
- Some switching as required (see Yard Switching above)
- Walking the length of the train