

## **FREIGHT TRAIN PLANNING**

Freight plays an important role in the Railway Industry and there are now a variety of companies operating freight trains (FOCs).

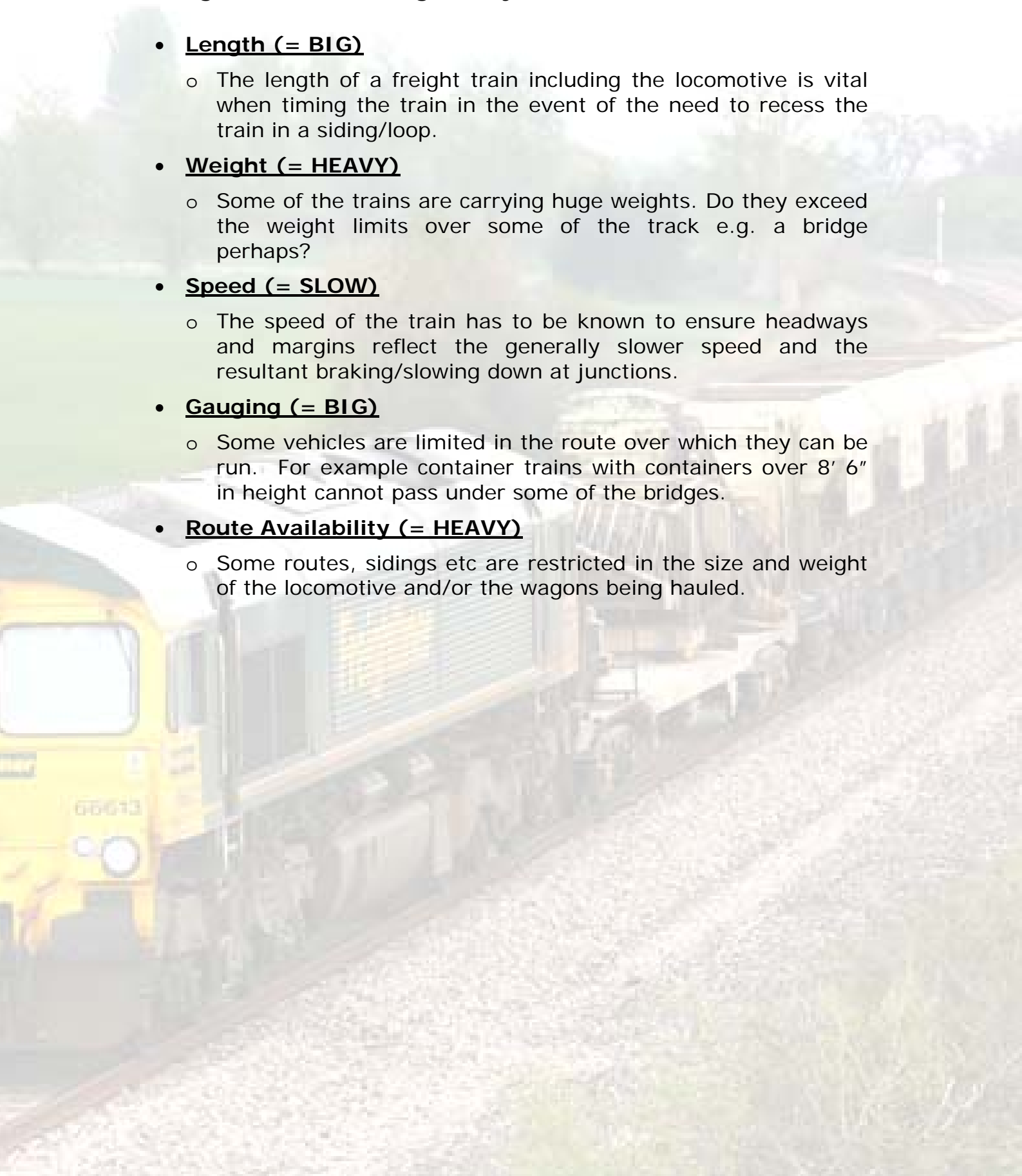
- DB Schenker (DBS) (previous EWS) carries the most varied flows of traffic and virtually covers the whole country
- Freightliner Intermodal is the biggest haulier of Container traffic, whilst sister company Freightliner Heavy Haul deals with bulk items such as coal, oil, aggregates, cars and waste traffic.
- Direct Rail Services (DRS) also convey containerised traffic, but its main business is the haulage of nuclear traffic.
- Great Britain Rail Freight (GBRf) carry various bulk traffics along with containers. Has the contract for hauling infrastructure maintenance traffic for LUL Metrolink to and from Wellingborough.
- Other smaller operators.
- All freight operators are involved in the haulage of "domestic" traffic as part of the Netrail operation supplying engineering materials for the upkeep and renewal of the railway network.

Sometimes the companies are in competition for traffic but the main challenge is always the road transport industry as the aim is constantly to produce more traffic to rail.

Train Planners play an important role in this task by offering optimum timing solutions, which are produced following consideration of some of the items discussed on this course.

## Freight is Different (Big, Heavy, Slow)

- **Length (= BIG)**
  - The length of a freight train including the locomotive is vital when timing the train in the event of the need to recess the train in a siding/loop.
- **Weight (= HEAVY)**
  - Some of the trains are carrying huge weights. Do they exceed the weight limits over some of the track e.g. a bridge perhaps?
- **Speed (= SLOW)**
  - The speed of the train has to be known to ensure headways and margins reflect the generally slower speed and the resultant braking/slowing down at junctions.
- **Gauging (= BIG)**
  - Some vehicles are limited in the route over which they can be run. For example container trains with containers over 8' 6" in height cannot pass under some of the bridges.
- **Route Availability (= HEAVY)**
  - Some routes, sidings etc are restricted in the size and weight of the locomotive and/or the wagons being hauled.



There are other important documents to consider:

### **Sectional Appendix**

Contains details of:

- Running lines and signalling arrangements
- Mileages
- Permanent Speed Restrictions
- Special Working arrangements
- General/Local instructions

### **Freight Train Loads Book**

Contains details of load maximums over individual routes. Sets out Route Availabilities, length Limits, etc.

### **Other maps/signalling diagrams**

- Track and station layouts
- Electrified routes
- Signalled routes

Reference has been made to vehicles that are sometimes "outsize" and the industry has in place procedures for ensuring that they fit within the railway infrastructure/gauge.

If exceptions apply, then form RT3973 is compiled within Train Planning offices outlining the restrictions and possibly limiting the weight, the length, the width, the speed or the route and time at which they must travel.

As mentioned earlier, freight is different and if there is doubt about any aspect of a train specification clarification must be sought from the freight company particularly in respect of days run (some trains only run once a week), whether paths with other trains can be exchanged or even with other operators can be used. Freight operators may, in some instances, have already agreed this "trading".

Finally, when planning freight trains remember that drivers cannot be at the controls all day and there are limits on journey times and relief points which must be considered when timing or flexing any service.