

What is a PTS Card: A Quick Primer



What Is a PTS Card?

The PTS Card or Personal Track Safety Card, enables individuals to legally work on or nearby Network Rail train tracks. The card is issued by Network Rail's chosen identity card scheme called Sentinel and is valid for 5 years.

Personal Track Safety Course or PTS Course covers a series of safe working practices that protect workers against being hit by trains, electrocutions, trips and falls. Having a PTS card makes you more employable within the railway.

If you're new to Track Safety, it's best to start with knowing what a PTS card actually is. Technically, when people refer to PTS card, they're really referring to having the PTS competence on their Sentinel card.

Anyone looking to work on or near the railway line requires a Personal Track Safety card which is obtained by completing the Initial Personal Track Safety Course or PTS course from an approved training provider.

When you've completed your PTS course, your Sentinel profile will be updated and updates uploaded into your sentinel card to reflect your new competence, allowing you to access work trackside.

Who Needs a PTS Course?

Any rail staff who wants to work near or on the railway line in the UK will need a PTS card to do so. It is not possible to work trackside without it. This will need to be presented to the Controller of Site Safety (COSS) via your [Sentinel smartcard](#) to gain access.

How Long Is The PTS Card For?

Currently, Personal Track Safety competencies are valid for two years, at which point you'll need to take a [PTS Renewal or re-certification course](#) which will take one full day to complete, unlike the [initial PTS course](#), which lasts for 2.5 days.

How Much Does the PTS Card Cost?

If you've never taken or completed a PTS course before, you'll need to take the PTS Initial – which will consist of e-learning modules and a practical day being trackside before being certified.

The cost of this course is £200. Should you already have taken a PTS course before but it has expired and need a renewal, the cost is £150.

How to Apply for a PTS Card

- You need PTS Sponsorship – this can be the rail company you work for, a company you would like to work for or a rail [recruitment and training company](#).
- You will need to undergo and pass a medical, drugs and alcohol test before attending a PTS course.
- Attend and pass the Initial Personal Track Safety course. This will be 2.5 days covering a practical and written exam.
- Upon passing both exams, you'll need to provide proof of your ID and 2 passport photographs.
- Your Sponsor will initiate proceedings to order your Sentinel card which can take up to 11 working days to arrive once the order has been placed.

Training Course for the PTS Card

As part of obtaining your [Sentinel PTS card](#), you need to complete the Initial Personal Track Safety Course. The training course takes 2 days to complete. By the end of the training, you should have an understanding of the Sentinel Scheme and how the Track Safety Handbook is relevant to you. The contents of the Initial PTS Course will help you stay safe and maintain a safe working environment around tracks.

The units include:

- Introduction to working on the track
- Accessing and Exiting the Track
- Working Safely
- Communication and Teamwork skills
- Emergency Procedures
- Safe system of work

- AC Electric Equipment
- DCCR Electrification Equipment

e-Learning module

Before taking the Initial PTS Course, you are required to complete an e-learning module. This will be sent by your training provider once you have booked your course.

The Initial Personal Track Safety Course is assessed by both a practical assessment and a written assessment. You will need to pass both to pass the course.

Course eligibility

To be eligible for the Initial PTS Course, you will need to be above the age of 16, have passed a medical test, a drug and alcohol screening, as well as have a sponsor from an approved company.

Upon completion of the course, you will receive a Personal Track Safety – PTS card which shows your competence to work track-side. You will need this to apply for your [PTS Card from Sentinel](#).

Here is a list of all of the Network Rail training you can obtain:

PTS	Personal Track Safety for non-electrified lines	COSS	Controller of site safety
PTS AC	Personal Track Safety for AC electrified lines	PC	Protection
PTS DC	Personal Track Safety for DC electrified lines	ES	Engineering supervisor
LKT	Lookout and site warden	PICOP	Person in charge of possession
LKT (P)	Lookout trained to use Pee Wee	SPICOP	Senior PICOP
LKT (K)	Lookout trained to use kango warning equip	NP	Nominated person
AOD: HS	Handsignaller	OLE/AC-i	
AOD:LXA	Level crossing attendant	AP	Authorised person
AOD: PO	Points operator	OLE/AC-i	
IWA	Individual working alone	RIO	Rail Incident officer
TRKIND	Track induction	BSN1	Bridge strike nominee grade 1
		BSN 2	Bridge strike nominee grade 2
		BSE	Bridge strike examining engineer