

Preface

This textbook provides, in a compact form, the fundamental knowledge in the science of railway operation in a close connection with signalling principles and traffic control technologies. It was written both as a tutorial for students of railway-related programs and as a reference for people in the industry.

But different from most other railway-related textbooks, it does not explain how the railway works in a single country. Due to the historical development, the operating procedures and terms of the railways in different countries differ significantly, probably much more than in any other field of technology. Even very basic terms and definitions may vary extremely. First, there are essential differences between the North American railways and railways that follow European operating procedures. And second, even within Europe, operation and signalling differ significantly between railways that follow more the British and those that follow more the German principles. And, as if this were not enough, in many countries there are also differences between the operating principles of the standard railway networks and light rail systems.

But, regardless of these differences in the operating philosophies, the basic principles of movements of railway vehicles are always the same. Although written from a European point of view, this book tries a generic look at railway operation without concentrating on the operating philosophy of a single railway. But where it makes sense, it is always mentioned if an operating procedure or signalling principle could only be found in a specific country or groups of countries. After an introductory chapter on basic terms and definitions, the second chapter provides some background on train movement dynamics. The following chapters on train separation and interlocking principles form the main part of the book. Other chapters cover capacity research, scheduling, and traffic management.

The terminology used in this book is neither pure British nor pure North American. I always tried to choose terms that are more internationally used. Following suggestions from readers of the first edition, selected terms were changed to ensure a more generic description of the railway

system. For a better understanding, a glossary was added with definitions of more than 200 basic terms of railway operation and control.

The information presented in this book is in no way intended to supersede or negate any rules, regulations, or instructions of government bodies or railway companies. Further, it is not intended to conflict with any currently effective manufacturers operating, application, or maintenance instructions and/or specifications.

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