

Interstate Possession Planning and Approval

OPE-PR-045

Applicability

Interstate Network SMS

Publication Requirement

Internal / External

Primary Source

Document Status

Version #	Date Reviewed	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Endorsed	Approved
1.0	12 August 2020	Interstate - Possessions Coordinator & Principal Coordinator Operations	Interstate General Manager Asset Management	Interstate - Possessions Manager	Interstate - General Manager Operations Services

Amendment Record

Amendment Version #	Date Reviewed	Clause	Description of Amendment
2.0	10 March 2021		Clarity of content based on stakeholder feedback Addition of T-Minus Tables and Decision Trees

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This procedure details the steps to be taken by ARTC Interstate Corridor Teams, Major Project and Third Party Project Teams and the Interstate Possession Team during the planning and approval of Interstate Possessions on the ARTC network.

1.2 Scope

The procedure outlines the responsibilities and actions of stakeholders when:

- applying for a track Possession;
- receiving and processing track Possession Requests; and
- managing the track Possession Calendar.

1.3 Procedure Owner

The General Manager Operation Services Interstate is the Procedure Owner.

1.4 Responsibilities

The Interstate Possessions Manager is responsible for the implementation of this procedure and is the initial point of contact for all queries relating to this procedure.

The following personnel have responsibility to ensure the steps outlined herein are conducted where relevant to the role:

- ARTC Interstate Possession Coordinators;
- ARTC Interstate Corridor Managers and delegates;
- ARTC Project Managers and delegates; and
- Third Party Project Managers and delegates.

1.5 Subordinate Documents

The following documents are subordinate to this procedure:

- [Interstate Possessions Calendar](#)
- [OPE-FM-041 Possessions Request Form](#)

1.6 Reference Documents

The following documents support this procedure:

- [OPE-PR-001 Preparation and Distribution of Operational Notices](#)
- [ETW-00-01 Track & Civil Code of Practice Response Booklet](#)

1.7 Definitions

The following terms and acronyms are used within this document:

Term or acronym	Description
Ad Hoc	Trains that operate on an as-needed basis and do not form part of the Master Train Plan.
ARTC	Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd.
ATP	As Traffic Permits.

Term or acronym	Description
Border Forecast	Expected time for a train to cross an interface network boundary.
Config	Configuration Closedown.
CRN	Country Rail Network (part of John Holland Group).
Emergency	An incident which requires urgent action with a significant and co-ordinated response. The incident might involve death or serious injury, health or safety effects, significant damage to property or infrastructure, significant train service disruption, or environmental impact. (Reference TA44 and NSW Rules Glossary)
GM	General Manager
Handback Window	Where the possession is fulfilled to allow for rail traffic movements and once the train has cleared the possession limits, the possession will be obtained again.
Interface Location	A location where operational control of the rail network changes to another entity.
Interstate Rail Network	The Defined Interstate Rail Network from Acacia Ridge to Kalgoorlie.
Mandatory Train	A train that is a contracted service to operate on the ARTC network and included in the Master Train Plan as a contracted, scheduled path.
Master Train Plan (MTP)	A complete listing of all contracted path schedules and associated information for the ARTC network.
Operator	An accredited above-rail operator.
Possession	A period during which project or asset maintenance teams have work access to a specified track section for a defined period.
Possession Team	The Interstate Possessions Team consists of the Possessions Manager and Possession Coordinators.
Possession Requestor	Refers to any person submitting a Possession Request, including ARTC Corridor Managers / delegates, ARTC Project Managers / delegates and Third-Party Project Managers / delegates.
Rail Traffic	Includes trains and track vehicles.
RIM	Rail Infrastructure Manager.
SAFE Notice (SN)	Gives immediate notice of changes or exceptions to ARTC Network Information Books and ARTC publications for the NSW network.
ST	Sydney Trains.
Train Alteration Advice (TAA)	Advises of track possessions and temporary alterations to the Master Train Plan (MTP).
Train Notice (TN)	Provides notice of temporary or permanent alterations to the ARTC Network.
TRIMS	The Train and Schedule Management Software used by ARTC to plan train paths and possessions.
TSR	Temporary Speed Restriction.

2 Types of Track Possessions

A range of possession options, dependant on work type and duration, permit access to the Interstate Rail Network as outlined below.

2.1 Configuration Closedown

Configuration Closedowns (Configs) occur in conjunction with Sydney Trains (ST) Configs and prevent all rail traffic (including mandatory trains and ad hoc traffic) from accessing a section of the ARTC network. All ST Configs are assigned a Config Number (see Table 1).

Given the high volume of rail traffic and the coordination required with the ST Network, these possessions are generally planned 24 to 48 months in advance.

Number	Location/s	Standard Duration
9	North Coast – Telarah (Exclusive) to Acacia Ridge (Exclusive)	32 – 56 hours
10A	Sydney MFN – Port Botany (Inclusive) & Marrickville Junction (ARTC/ST Interface Location) to Enfield West (Exclusive) & Flemington South (ARTC/ST Interface Location)	48 hours
10B	Sydney MFN – Port Botany (Inclusive) and Marrickville Junction (ARTC/ST Interface Location) to Chullora Junction (Clear of Nth Fork)	48 hours
14	Sydney MFN & Southern Highlands – Enfield West & Macarthur (ARTC/ST Interface Location) to Moss Vale (Exclusive)	52 hours
16	Moss Vale to Unanderra Branch Line	36 hours

Table 1 - Alignment of Transport for NSW Configuration Closedowns across the ARTC Network

The locations and/or duration of the Configs outlined in Table 1 may change as a result of stakeholder requirements.

2.2 Major Closedown

A Major Closedown Possession is greater than 60 hours in duration and prevents all rail traffic (including mandatory trains and ad hoc traffic) from accessing a section of the network.

2.3 Total Possession

A Total Possession is less than 60 hours in duration and prevents all rail traffic (including mandatory trains and ad hoc traffic not included in the Possession) from accessing a section of the network and may require traffic to be diverted to another track or route.

All planned network activities that result in the suspension of the normal system of safe working, the introduction of a temporary system of safe working (eg. Pilot Staff Working, Train Authority Working, Train Order Working etc.), or will result in train delays require a Total Possession Request.

2.4 Window Possession

A Window Possession allows mandatory trains to transit the section as planned and restricts access for ad hoc traffic.

Ad hoc services may be:

- restricted from operating within the Possession times or;
- allowed to operate under specified conditions as agreed by the Possessions Coordinator and Requester.

Operating restrictions or alternate systems of safe working, excluding Temporary Speed Restrictions (TSRs), should not be implemented at the conclusion of a Window Possession. If it can be reasonably foreseen that operating restrictions or alternate systems of safe working will be required following fulfilment of the Possession, a Window Possession is not appropriate.

2.5 As Traffic Permits (ATP) Possession

An ATP Possession is authorised by ARTC Network Control on the day of operation, between mandatory and ad hoc services only, and allows all trains to transit as required. Work teams must clear the track ahead of all train movements.

Operating restrictions or alternate systems of safe working, excluding TSRs, should not be implemented at the conclusion of an ATP Possession. If it can be reasonably foreseen that operating restrictions or alternate systems of safe working will be required following fulfilment of the Possession, an ATP Possession is not appropriate.

Reoccurring and/or advance notice ATP Possessions shall be advertised in the Interstate Possessions Calendar where practical to do so. ATP Possessions that have been published in the Possessions Calendar will be subject to an initial review and included in works coordination activities where required. If scheduling conflicts occur, advertised ATP works will be given priority of over non-advertised works.

2.6 Urgent Possession

An Urgent Possession is taken in response to a need for unplanned maintenance at short notice to ensure the integrity and safety of the network and its users and may impact normal rail traffic movements. Any defect that requires repair within 28 days under the provisions of [ETW-00-01 Track & Civil Code of Practice Response Booklet](#) will be considered Urgent.

2.7 Emergency Possession

An Emergency Possession is taken in response to an incident that requires a significant and co-ordinated response. The incident might involve death or serious injury, health or safety effects, significant damage to property or infrastructure, significant train service disruption, or environmental impact. Normal rail traffic movements will be held or suspended in the event of an Emergency Possession under the authority of ARTC Network Control. The Possession Team have no responsibility in the event of an Emergency Possession.

3 Possession Planning

3.1 Introduction

All track Possessions require a systematic and coordinated planning process, the aim of which is to optimise the availability and the efficiency of infrastructure work groups to gain access to the rail network, whilst minimising the operational impact to stakeholders.

Possessions that affect, or have the potential to affect, train running must be requested in accordance with this procedure, with the exemption of Emergency and Urgent Possessions.

In many instances, extensive consultation with internal and external stakeholders is required. Due diligence is essential as each entity is bound by their own internal governance, local regulations and State laws.

Stakeholders include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ARTC internal parties;
- Interfacing Rail Infrastructure Maintainers (RIMs) including John Holland Country Rail Network (CRN), Sydney Trains, V/Line, Queensland Rail, Arc Infrastructure;
- Above-Rail Operators;
- Third Party Projects; and
- External Parties.

3.2 Interstate Possessions Calendar

The Interstate Possessions Calendar is the primary repository and advertising vehicle for Possession Requests and is maintained by the Possessions Team. Published monthly, the Possessions Calendar details all Possession Requests that fall within the applicable minimum advertisement periods and those with special consideration approval.

Available on the [ARTC public website](#), the calendar is also distributed at the beginning of each month to internal and external stakeholders as the key resource for network possession planning.

The Possessions Calendar details the following:

- **Dates** – Proposed start & finish dates of the works and date the Request was received;
- **Times** – Proposed start & finish times of the works;
- **Location** – Works location (from and to) including Corridor name and section details;
- **Affected Tracks** – Specific track details e.g. Up Main, Main Line, Local Line, Loop Line;
- **Type of Possession** – Possession category (refer [Section 2](#));
- **Scope of Works** – Detail of the planned works;
- **Status of the Request** –
 - **Pending** – Under assessment and/or subject to stakeholder consultation;
 - **Supported** – In-principle support received from all stakeholders however may be subject to minor amendments pending train planning activities;
 - **Approved** – All Possession planning activities completed and dates, times & Train Alterations Advice (TAA) confirmed;
 - **Declined** – Assessed and not approved;
 - **Cancelled** – Advice received that the works will not occur as previously advertised; new dates will be detailed in the comment section where relevant.

3.3 Minimum Advertisement Periods for inclusion in the Possession Calendar

Minimum advertisement periods are required to allow for adequate assessment and stakeholder engagement prior to a Possession taking place. The type of Possession dictates the timeline as shown in Table 2 below.

Requests that need to appear in the Possessions Calendar are required by 07:00 hours on the 21st day of the month prior to publication. Extenuating circumstances require consultation with the Possessions Manager and, where necessary, shall be escalated to the Interstate General Manager (GM) level.

Requestors are encouraged to submit Possession Requests ahead of the minimum period.

Requests received within the minimum advertisement period are published in the Possessions Calendar and subject to further assessment and stakeholder consultation.

Type of Possession	Minimum Advertisement Period
Advertisement periods begin when the Possession is first published in the Possessions Calendar	
Configuration Closedown	104 Weeks
Major Closedown (>60hrs in Duration)	78 Weeks
Total Possession (>12hrs to <= 60hrs in Duration)	52 Weeks
Total Possession (<= 12hrs in Duration)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possessions impacting on The Ghan & Indian Pacific • Possessions impacting on other passenger services • Possessions impacting on Freight Services 	52 Weeks 26 Weeks 16 Weeks
Window Possession	4 Weeks
Possessions impacting on Grain Branch Lines	8 Weeks
ATP Possession	As arranged by ARTC Network Control on day of operation
In exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Interstate GM Group, the above periods may be reduced.	

Table 2 - Minimum Advertisement Periods

3.4 Possession Request Minimum Pre-Requisites

The following shall be considered and included in the Possession Request:

- Type of track Possession to complete the scope of works (refer [Section 2](#));
- Minimum time required to complete the work safely, allowing a reasonable amount of contingency time;
- Significance / criticality of the works;
- Any handback windows to minimise train delays;
- Safe working limits required to conduct the works safely;
- Any impacts to signalling systems, ensuring that there are no impacts outside of the requested possession limits;
- Any post-possession impacts that may be required after the Possession has been completed e.g. Special train working or CAN warnings;
- Alignment, where relevant, with other works occurring on the same corridor or adjacent corridors to minimise network disruption; and

- Submit the Request within the Minimum Advertisement Period (refer [Section 3.3](#)).

3.5 Possession Request Considerations

Due diligence prior to submitting a Possession Request can facilitate efficient processing and response times. Where relevant, the following factors should be considered.

- Consult the Master Train Plan (MTP) to identify potential Possession window(s) with minimal impact to train operations. The MTP is accessible via the ARTC Website [Master Train Plan](#) or TRIMS. Note: the MTP is subject to change without notice.
- Identify and detail any potential train impacts. Note: If passenger trains are impacted, this may require a longer Minimum Advertisement Period.
- For works conducted by an external party, refer to the ARTC Website [External Parties Accessing the Rail Corridor](#) and liaise with ARTC Property and/or ARTC Third Party Projects to obtain any required legal documentation.

3.6 Submitting a Possession Request

Only ARTC personnel are permitted to submit Possession Requests. Requestors should collaborate and coordinate with relevant Corridor Management before submitting a Request. Note: Requirements may vary between Corridors.

3.6.1 Possession Request Form

All Possession Requests must be submitted using [OPE-FM-041 Possession Request Form](#). Guidelines for completing are included within the form.

Completed Possession Requests are to be emailed to: InterstatePossessions@ARTC.com.au

4 Possession Assessment

4.1 Introduction

Receipt, assessment and approval of Requests by the Possessions Team includes the following steps:

- Acknowledgement the Request has been received;
- Stakeholder consultation and communication;
- Request assessment taking into account the factors outlined below; and
- Request status negotiation and communication with the Requestor.

4.2 Assessment Factors

Several factors must be considered in the assessment of Possession Requests to ensure the integrity and safety of the network and its users, as outlined below.

- **Receipt of Request** within the relevant minimum advertisement period.
- **Impact** to ARTC network operations, customers and interfacing rail networks including:
 - total number of impacts a service will encounter en-route;
 - time criticality of a service and ability to absorb en-route delays; and
 - ability to meet time deadlines onto adjacent rail networks.
- **Master Train Plan (MTP)** constraints and 'life' of the current plan.
- **Programmed or Future Works** on the same or adjacent corridor or adjacent networks to avoid continuous train running disruption.
- **Peak Rail Traffic Periods** vary by season, gazetted holidays, special events, days of the week and/or time of day and necessitate greater stakeholder consultation. Indicative Peak Rail Traffic Periods (Subject to Change Without Notice):

NSW / VIC Grain Harvest	November to March
Intermodal Freight	October to December
SA Grain Harvest	October to April

Consideration may be given to Possession Requests between Christmas and New Years Day, over the Easter Weekend or other gazetted long weekends within the indicative 'Peak Rail Periods' as freight requirements are generally reduced.

- **Post-Possession Impacts** and whether the track will be fully operational at the completion of the Possession. Note: the Request should detail any special train working or warning requirements to be imposed after the Possession completion.
- **Availability of alternate ad hoc pathing options (Window Possessions Only)** taking into account the needs of Operators and Asset/Project priorities.
- **Criticality of the Possession** to the continued safe operations on the ARTC Network. A lack of due diligence in the planning process will not constitute an elevated level of criticality.
- **Special Consideration** may be required, for example, due to the criticality of the Request. In such an event, the Request will be escalated to the Interstate GM Group.

4.3 Stakeholder Consultation

Monthly stakeholder meetings are held with the Possessions Team, Operators and interfacing RIMs to discuss the Possessions Calendar, Possession Requests and impacts to train operations. The Possessions Team also participates in Possession planning meetings with Corridor Teams, Major Projects and Third Party Project Teams as required.

Possession Assessment

At the discretion of the Possessions Team, meetings between the requestor and other stakeholders may be arranged to discuss specific possession requests.

The purpose of these meetings is to afford stakeholders the opportunity to provide inprinciple support and/or objections to a proposed Possession including dates, duration, alterations to train paths, standing time and other operational impacts. ARTC makes every effort to work with customers to achieve a mutually acceptable outcome.

Stakeholder support progresses the process to train planning activities and to formal notification of the Possession via a TAA (refer [Section 5](#)).

In the event stakeholders do not support the Possession, the Possessions Team will further consult with the Requestor to negotiate a suitable outcome for all parties. Should a resolution not be achieved, the matter will be escalated to the Interstate GM group (Operations, Assets, Commercial and Customer Service) as relevant.

5 Approved Possession Notification

5.1 Introduction

The Possessions Team will advise written approval of Possession Requests directly to the Possession Requestor in the first instance and the Possessions Calendar updated accordingly.

5.2 TRIMS

Approved Possessions are entered into TRIMS.

5.3 T-Minus Guidelines for Possessions

The following table shows T-Minus guidelines by Possession Type. Requests received in advance of the minimum advertisement periods (refer [section 3.3](#)) may expedite the assessment and stakeholder engagement processes.

Possession Type:	Configuration Closedown
T-Minus (Weeks)	Actions
T-104	Initial Possession Assessment (Status: Pending)
T-103	Stakeholder Engagement Start
T-60	Stakeholder Engagement Concludes, Stakeholder Support Point (Status: Approved / Declined)
T-10	Train Pathing Alteration Planning Start (Pending TRIMS Data Availability)
T-4	Train Pathing Alteration Planning Complete
T-3	Draft TAA Published
T-2	Final TAA Published
T-0	Works Conducted

Possession Type:	Major Closedown (> 60hrs in Duration)
T-Minus (Weeks)	Actions
T-77	Initial Possession Assessment (Status: Pending)
T-70	Stakeholder Engagement Start
T-48	Stakeholder Engagement Concludes, Stakeholder Support Point (Status: Approved / Declined)
T-10	Train Pathing Alteration Planning Start (Pending TRIMS Data Availability)
T-4	Train Pathing Alteration Planning Complete
T-3	Draft TAA Published
T-2	Final TAA Published
T-0	Works Conducted

Approved Possession Notification

Possession Type:	Total Possession (> 12hrs in Duration) & Total Possession (<= 12hrs in Duration) that impact on The Ghan & Indian Pacific services
T-Minus (Weeks)	Actions
T-51	Initial Possession Assessment (Status: Pending)
T-48	Stakeholder Engagement Start
T-32	Stakeholder Engagement Concludes, Stakeholder Support Point (Status: Supported / Not Supported)
T-10	Train Pathing Alteration Planning Start (Pending TRIMS Data Availability)
T-4	Train Pathing Alteration Planning Complete, Possession Final Approval Point (Status: Approved / Declined)
T-3	Draft TAA Published
T-2	Final TAA Published
T-0	Works Conducted

Possession Type:	Total Possession (<= 12hrs in Duration) that impact on other Passenger services
T-Minus (Weeks)	Actions
T-23	Initial Possession Assessment (Status: Pending)
T-22	Stakeholder Engagement Start
T-12	Stakeholder Engagement Concludes, Stakeholder Support Point (Status: Supported / Not Supported)
T-10	Train Pathing Alteration Planning Start (Pending TRIMS Data Availability)
T-4	Train Pathing Alteration Planning Complete, Possession Final Approval Point (Status: Approved / Declined)
T-3	Draft TAA Published
T-2	Final TAA Published
T-0	Works Conducted

Possession Type:	Total Possession (<= 12hrs in Duration) that impact on Freight services
T-Minus (Weeks)	Actions
T-15	Initial Possession Assessment (Status: Pending)
T-14	Stakeholder Engagement Start
T-11	Stakeholder Engagement Concludes, Stakeholder Support Point (Status: Supported / Not Supported)

T-10	Train Pathing Alteration Planning Start (Pending TRIMS Data Availability)
T-4	Train Pathing Alteration Planning Complete, Possession Final Approval Point (Status: Approved / Declined)
T-3	Draft TAA Published
T-2	Final TAA Published
T-0	Works Conducted

Possession Type:	Possessions impacting on Grain Branch Lines
T-Minus (Weeks)	Actions
T-7	Initial Possession Assessment (Status: Pending)
T-6	Stakeholder Engagement Start
T-4	Stakeholder Engagement Concludes, Stakeholder Support Point (Status: Supported / Not Supported)
T-3	Train Pathing Alteration Planning Start
T-2	Train Pathing Alteration Planning Complete, Possession Final Approval Point (Status: Approved / Declined), Final TAA Published
T-0	Works Conducted

Possession Type:	Window Possession
T-Minus (Weeks)	Actions
T-3	Possession Assessment (Approved / Declined)
T-2	TAA Published
T-0	Works Conducted

Table 3: T-Minus Guidelines

5.4 Train Alteration Advice (TAA)

Where alterations to train running is required, a draft Train Alteration Advice (TAA) is issued.

Further consultation / engagement will take place when required.

Where alterations impact an interfacing network, the Possession Team will liaise with the relevant network stakeholders.

Agreed alterations will be amended in TRIMS. The formal notification of an approved Possession Request is the publication of a TAA and will be published 2 to 4 weeks prior to works commencing.

5.5 Pathing & Operational Notices

Following approval, it is the requestors responsibility to consult with planning personnel in the Commercial and Customer Service team to obtain path(s) for work trains and track machines required to traverse the network to and from the Possession location;

Train Notices (SA and Vic.) and Safe Notices (NSW) are not part of the possessions approval process or part of the Possessions Team remit. Individuals requiring Operational Notices should refer to [OPE-PR-001 Preparation and Distribution of Operational Notices](#).

6 Possession Amendments

6.1 Introduction

The Possession Team routinely send a courtesy reminder email to Possession Requesters the week before the Possession Calendar deadline seeking any changes to the Possession Request. Likewise, all parties with upcoming Possessions are required to maintain regular communications with the Possessions Team as to the status of planned activities.

6.2 Change Requests

Changes to an existing Possession Request will be treated as per [Section 4](#).

All change requests are to be submitted using the [OPE-FM-041 Possessions Request Form](#), with the changes written in bold font and coloured **blue**.

Note: Change requests that will result in altered or additional impacts to rail traffic will be subject to further consultation with stakeholders.

If the changes are approved, the Possessions Team will:

- Update TRIMS to reflect the new arrangements
- Amend existing TAA (if issued) to show the changes in **green**;
- Publish the changes in the next Interstate Possessions Calendar where applicable.

6.3 Cancellation Requests

Upon advice of a Possession cancellation, the Possession Team will:

- Advise operators where applicable;
- Remove the Possession from TRIMS;
- Amend any existing TAA to show the cancellation in **red**;
- Publish the changes in the next Interstate Possessions Calendar where applicable and remove from subsequent publications.

7 Urgent Possessions

Where access to the rail network is required for urgent works, Corridor Manager approval is required prior to submitting the Possession Request to the Possessions Team.

Minimum Request periods do not apply.

Track defects that meet the criteria requiring repair within 28 days or less, in accordance with [ETW-00-01 Track & Civil Code of Practice Response Booklet](#), are treated as an Urgent Possession.

The Possessions Team will coordinate with stakeholders relevant to the area of works to identify an appropriate time for works to be conducted. Refer [Appendix 2 Urgent Possession Request Process Flow](#).

Urgent Possessions Requests shall be emailed to InterstatePossessions@ARTC.com.au with the following detail:

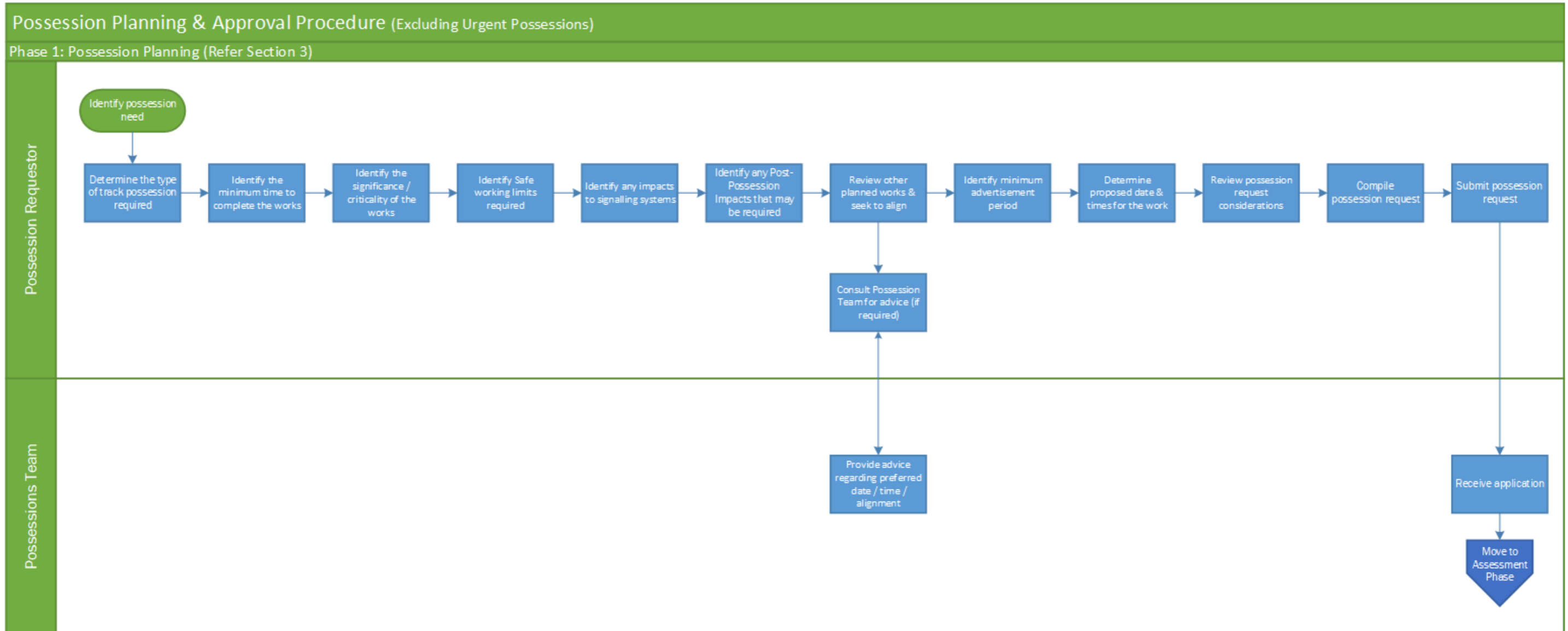
- Reason for the Urgent Possession Request;
- Safe working limits required;
- Proposed date & time to complete the works; and
- Any relevant details relating to the management of trains or the worksite.

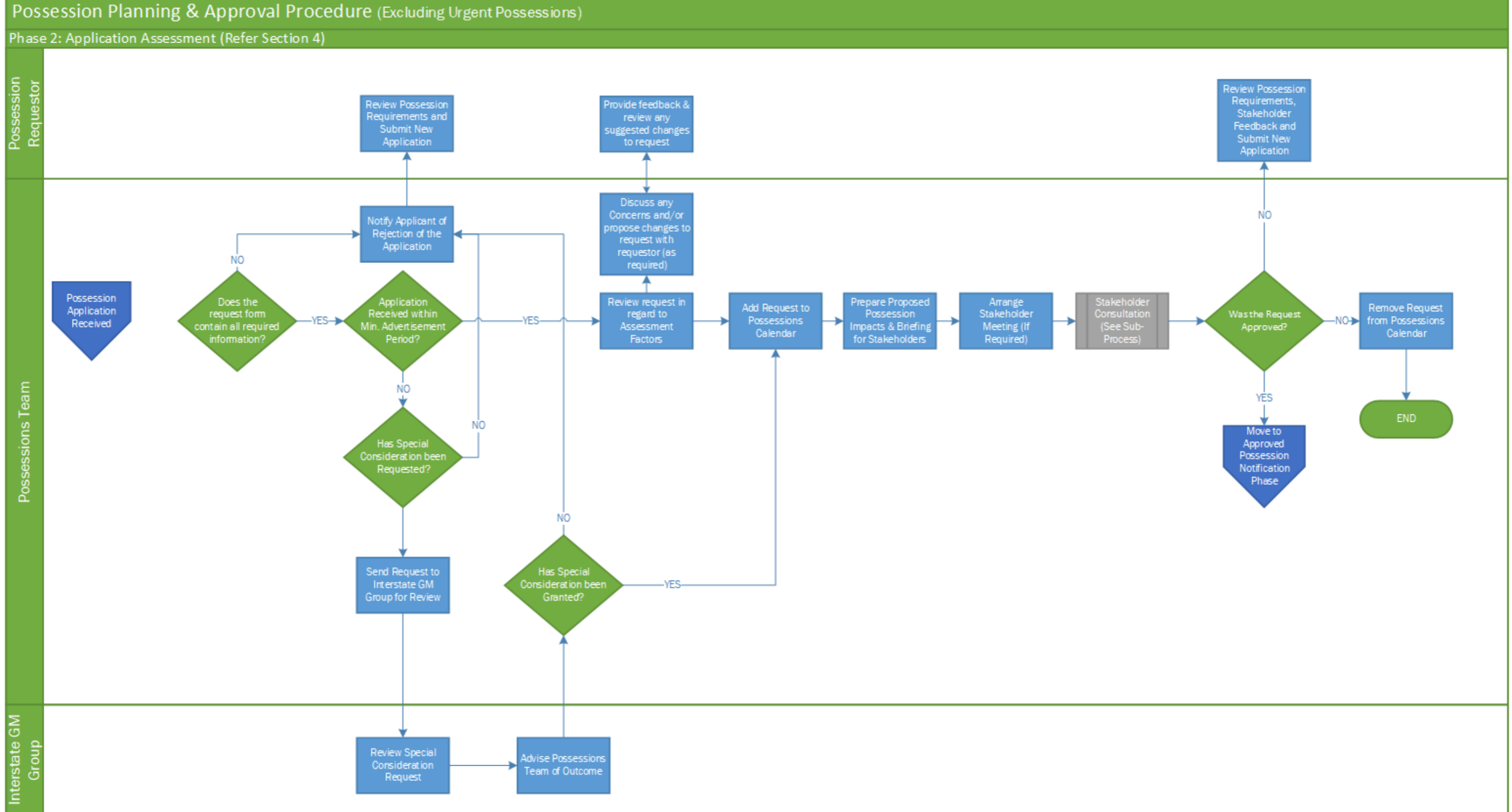
8 Emergency Possessions

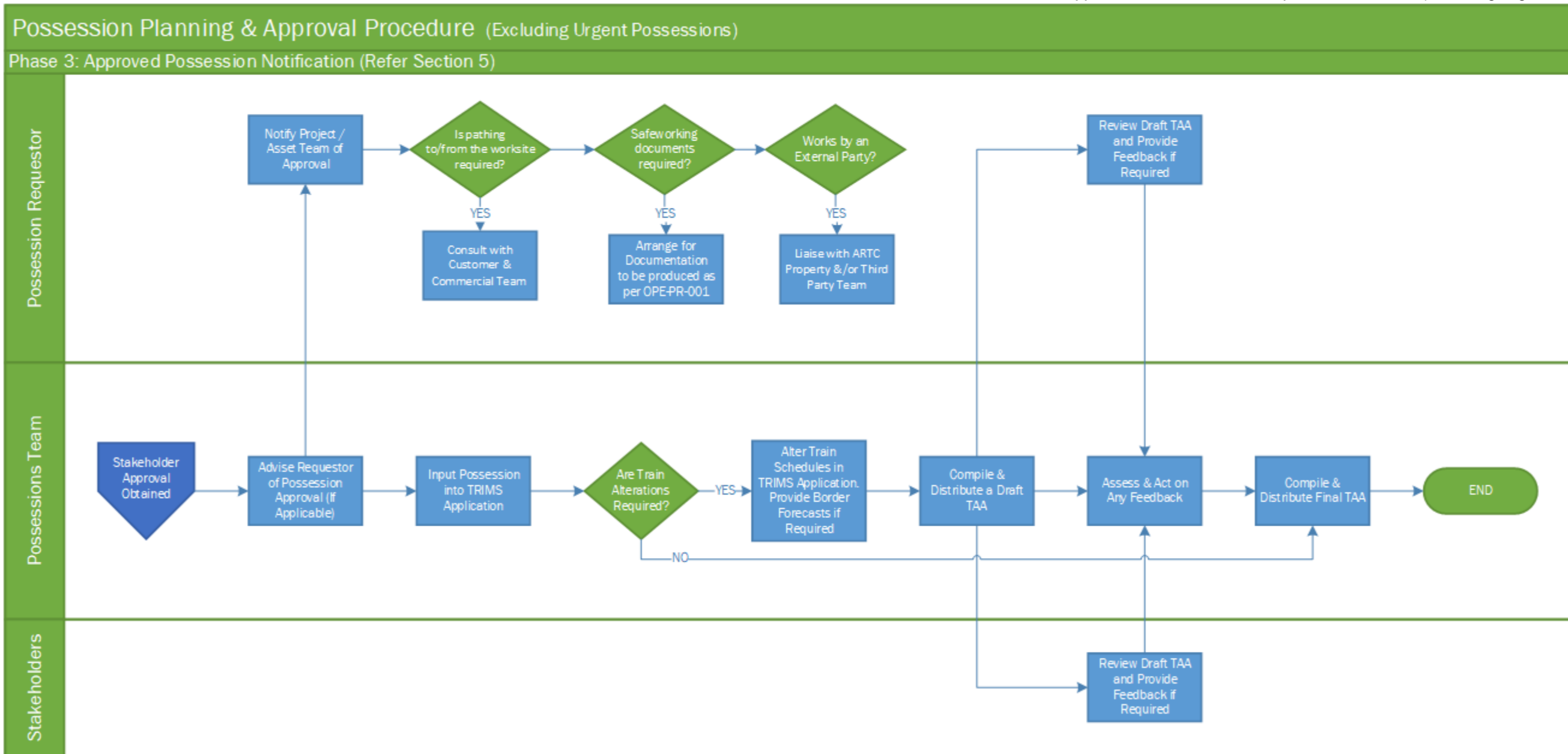
Refer to the Glossary definition of Emergency [and Section 2.7](#)

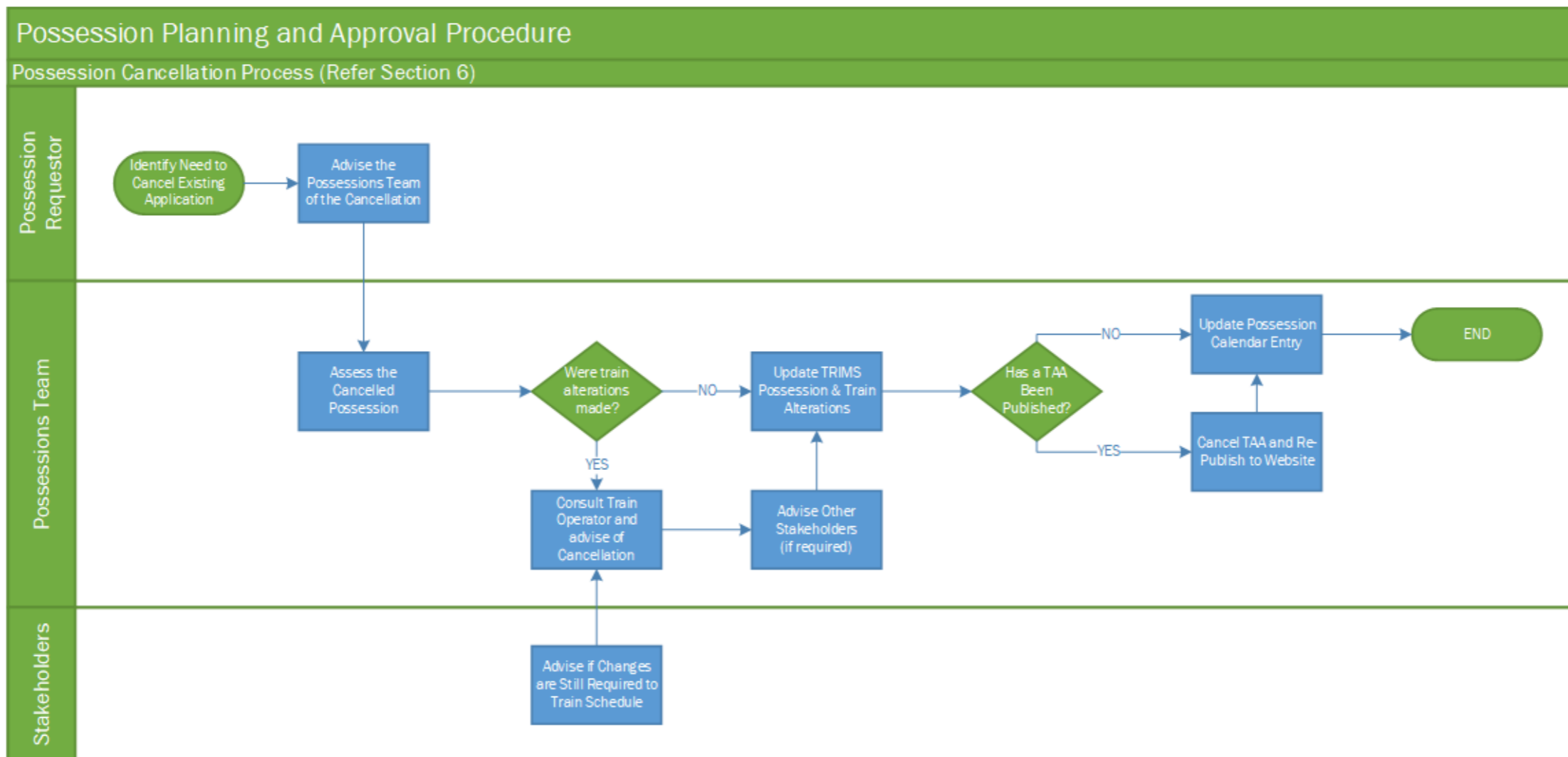
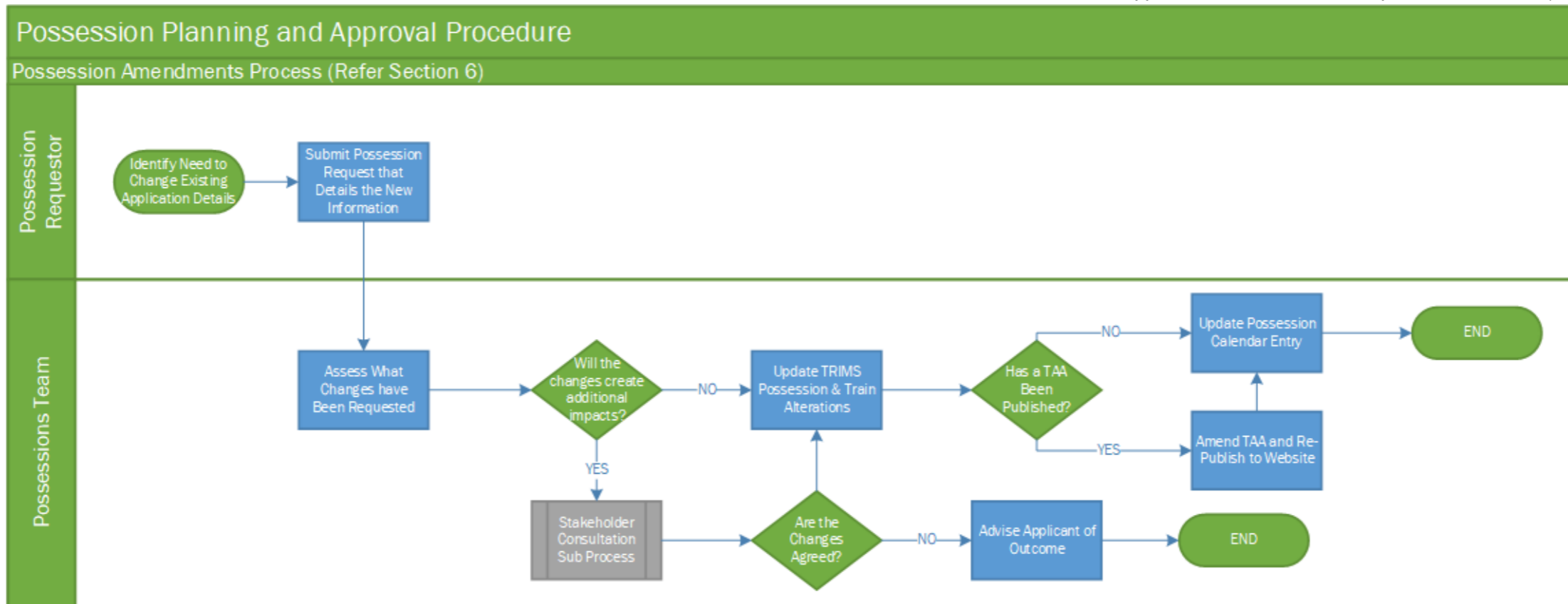
Emergency Possessions require direct communication with Network Control to plan and manage the event. No involvement by the Possessions Team is required.

9 Appendix 1 – Possessions Request Process Flow (Excluding Urgent Possessions)



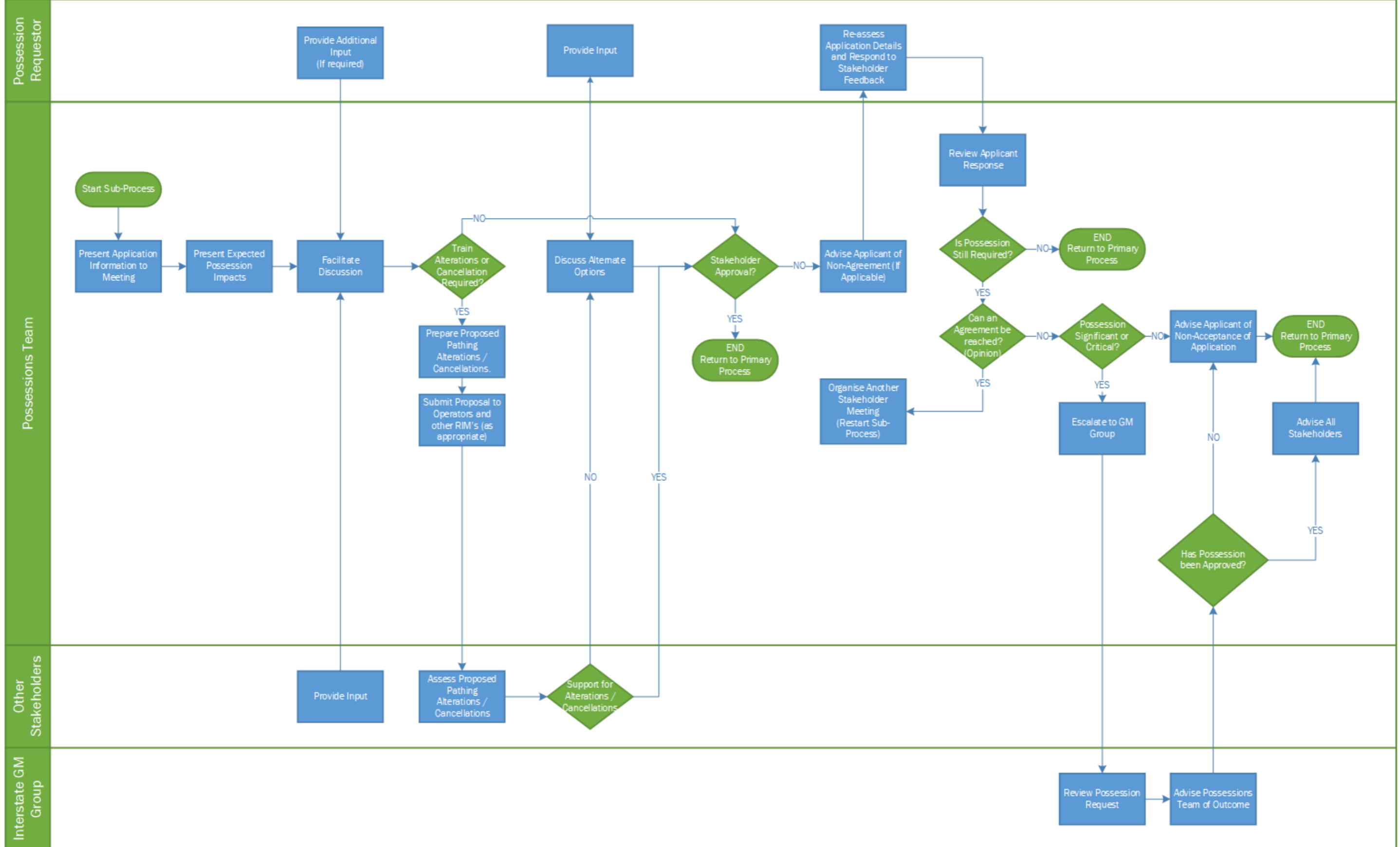




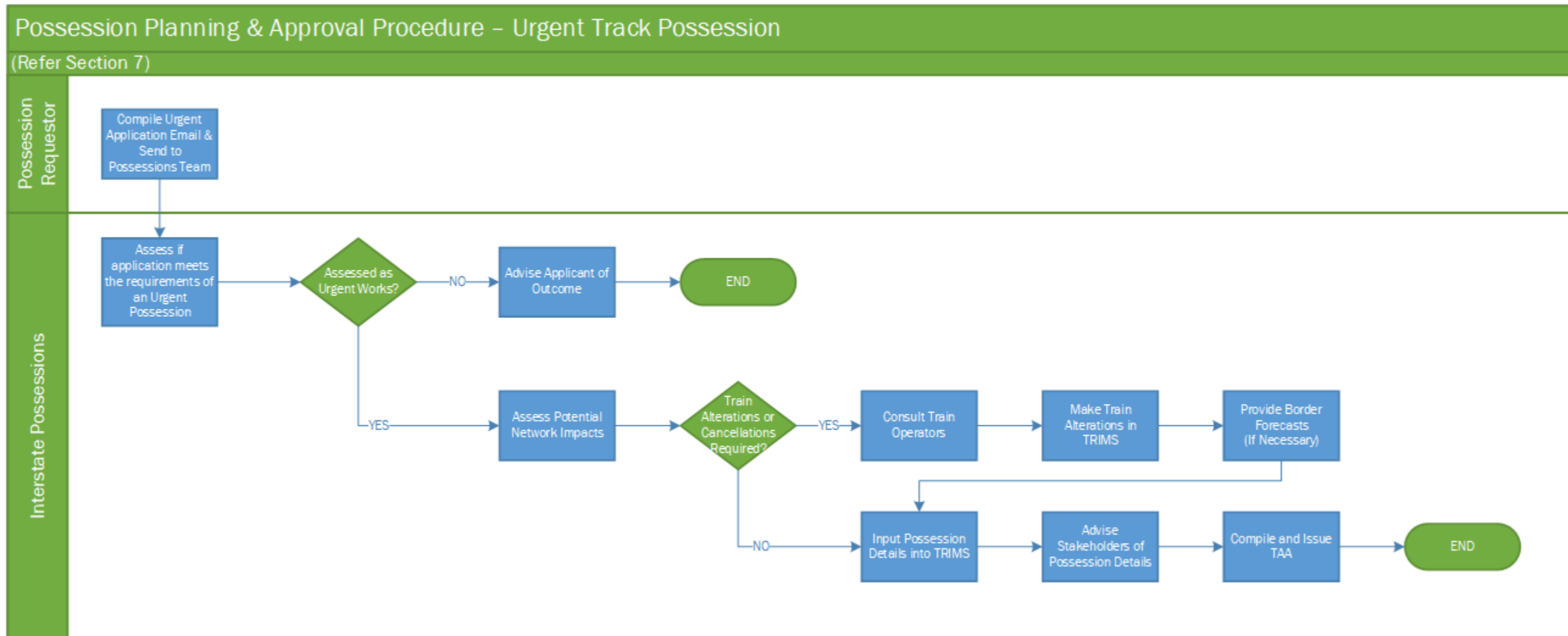


Possession Planning & Approval Procedure (Excluding Urgent Possessions)

Sub-Process: Stakeholder Consultation (Refer Phase 2: Application Assessment / Section 4)



10 Appendix 2 – Urgent Possessions Request Process Flow



11 Appendix 3 – Decision Trees

Total Possession / Major Possession / Configuration Possession Assessment
Decision Tree

