

Australian Society of Section Car Operators

ABN: 31 930 950 428 Registered Charity

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Membership Information Pack

About ASSCO

The Australian Society of Section Car Operators is a well-established not-for-profit organisation and an Australian registered charity currently based in Queensland, Australia, that for over 23 years has been dedicated to the restoration, operation, and promotion of heritage railway Section Cars. A Section Car is a small railway vehicle that was historically used by railway workers to access worksites to perform track maintenance and repair.

Members of ASSCO come from all walks of life and bring a broad range of quality skills to the organisation. Not all members are employed by the rail industry and membership is open to **anybody** over the age of 16.

Travelling via Section Car is a great and unique way to see Australia by rail.

ASSCO is a 'Third Party Railway Operator', meaning that it is able to access railway tracks owned and operated by organisations such as Queensland Rail and Aurizon. This allows ASSCO the scope to travel over some of the vast metropolitan, tropical, rural, and arid railway lines across parts of Australia. (See our events page at: www.assco.com.au, for past and upcoming runs).



Being an accredited rail operator means that ASSCO has appropriate safety systems and regulations in place to keep our members and on-track operations safe. Safety is at the forefront of our organization, and we have a proud safety record. We are routinely audited by the National Rail Safety Regulator (ONRSR) to ensure our high standards of safety and operations are maintained. ASSCO has a proven track record and is held to the same high standards as major rail operators such as QR, Aurizon, and Pacific National.

ASSCO is also a current member of ATHRA (Association of Tourist and Heritage Rail of Australia) and affiliated with NARCOA (North American Railcar Operators Association). For more information about our history, please visit our website at: www.assco.com.au

Membership Levels

Currently ASSCO has three levels of membership:

- ACTIVE:

The Active membership is the full unrestricted membership level of ASSCO. It allows a member full voting rights to the society, as well as the ability to participate on all ASSCO runs.

Active Membership Cost: \$220* per year (\$120 membership fee + \$100 Insurance Fee)

- NON-ACTIVE:

The Non-Active membership allows full voting rights to the society, however, does not permit a member to participate on an ASSCO run.

This membership level is suited to those members that are unable to participate on a run but would like to remain a member and support the society. If a non-active member wishes to participate on an ASSCO run, they can upgrade at **any time** by completing the relevant training and paying the insurance levy.



Non-Active Membership Cost: \$120* per year (\$120 membership fee only)

- FAMILY:

The Family membership allows immediate relatives of existing ASSCO members to become members of the society for a discounted price.

This membership level allows the family member to participate on all ASSCO runs however does not grant voting or committee rights to the society.

A family membership must be linked to a financial active member to be valid. If the full active member becomes unfinancial or resigns from the society, the family member must upgrade their membership level to remain valid. There is no limit on how many family memberships can be linked to an active member.

Family Membership Cost: \$120* per year (\$50 membership fee + \$50 insurance fee)

***Note:** If membership renewal is paid on or before the 31st of December a discount of 10% is applied to all membership levels so the Active Member fee will be \$200, Non Active \$100 and Family \$100.

For further information regarding membership renewals and applications, please email:

secretary@assco.com.au

Membership Joining Process

1. New member completes on the line membership form and forwards the appropriate fee.
2. Membership application is tabled at the next committee meeting for acceptance. New member is advised of outcome.
3. Once accepted, ASSCO will assist the new member (active or family) in completing initial induction and rail safety training. This will comprise of:
 - **ASSCO Induction:** An induction information package that introduces the new member to the society's operations and safety management system that will have to be read and signed.
 - **ACCELL Certificate II in Rail Infrastructure:** 6 of the **Cert II** modules are required to be completed in your own time with links on the ASSCO web site. The online courses provided by ACCELL, our preferred training organization, are at an ASSCO reduced price and once completed you become a qualified ASSCO RSW (Rail Safety Worker)

TLID1010 – Shift materials using manual handling methods = \$120*

TLIE1003 – Participate in basic workplace communications = \$120*

TLIF1001 – Follow work health and safety procedures = \$120*

TLIF2010 – Apply fatigue management strategies = \$120*

TLIU2008 – Apply environmental procedures to rail infrastructure = \$120*

TLIF2080 Safely access the rail corridor (SARC) = \$130*

Any member wishing to become an operator must have completed all the above training and in addition the nationally accredited course TLIC0010 –Propel and Operate Light on-Track Equipment.

This course will be conducted internally with our ASSCO registered trainer and for a small nominal fee of \$30* officially registered through ACCELL. It will require a written exam plus a practical driving assessment over three days of operation.

The Rail Safety Worker training courses only need to be completed once and are nationally recognised. New members already holding any of the above current course certificates required will have them accepted as undertaken and will therefore only be required to undertake the relevant courses where current certificates are not held. It is advisable to check with our safety manager safety@assco.com.au to confirm if any of the required certificates you may already hold are acceptable.

***NOTE:** -Course prices are valid at March 2023 and maybe subject to change.

Medicals: - New and existing members are required to organise and undergo a certified railway medical on a regular basis to participate in events as passengers and/or operate section cars. This is a requirement under the national rail safety legislation and must be renewed every 5 years to age 50, every 2 years to age 60 and every year over 60 years of age.

The relevant documentation to present to your preferred accredited health provider can be downloaded from the ASSCO web site but the cost is borne by the individual member. A Cat. 1 medical holder allows an operator to drive alone, a Cat. 2 holder can only operate a car when accompanied by another person and a Cat. 3 holder can only ride as a passenger.

New members holding a **current** accredited Railway Medical Certificate obtained from another Australian Rail Operator will have it accepted by ASSCO.

NOTE: - The ASSCO induction and ACCELL online training must be commenced along with possessing a current medical certificate before the first event that a new active/family member attends.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the requirements for Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) on an ASSCO Event?

Members must always wear full Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) while on the host railways property/in their corridor and during an event.

PPE requirements: - High visibility **orange** (no other colour is acceptable) shirt/vest, long pants, protective boots, sunscreen, hat, eye, and ear protection.

Do I need to own a Section Car to become a member?

No. There are many ASSCO members that do not own section cars themselves but enjoy participating in the organisation's events/runs. Section Car owners are generally more than happy to take other members as passengers on runs.

I don't own a Section Car, however can I still learn how to drive one?

Yes. ASSCO and its many members are willing to mentor and assist a new member wishing to operate a Section Car once the relevant training courses have been undertaken.

I am restoring a Section Car; can you help me?

Yes, we certainly can! ASSCO members are a united team with many members very knowledgeable and willing to assist other members in their restoration projects. A network of vital parts to keep our heritage machines running is also available across the membership.

Does ASSCO accept all types of Section Cars?

We welcome most makes and models of post WW2 Section Cars that operated in Australia to participate in ASSCO events provided they can meet ASSCO's accreditation standard. Some rare and vintage cars, i.e. ones with wooden spoked wheels may be excluded as they are unable to meet modern safety standards.

Can I join ASSCO if I hold membership in another Section Car group or Railway Historical society?

Yes! ASSCO does not discriminate and therefore has no restrictions if members belong to other groups irrespective of their status within those groups. ASSCO welcomes the many skills, comradery and collective strength that can be shared amongst historical railway organisations to the benefit of all.

Can I try before I buy/ bring a family member along for a ride?

Yes! Paying passengers (Non – members, family, friends, etc.) are permitted to attend **one** run. Passengers must then join as a fully-fledged member if they wish to attend more than one run. Passengers will need to complete a basic induction, pay the daily meet fee, an insurance levy, and sign an indemnity but do not need to go through active membership training or obtain a medical for a one-off run. Passengers are **not** permitted to operate a Section Car or undertake any regulated safety procedures.

What is the general cost of each run?

The cost of each run can depend on the number of participants and location of the event, but generally is \$80-100 per day*. As the insurance fee is part of the yearly membership fee, daily run fees cover the cost of the access fee charged by the railway owner (generally Queensland Rail). Members can elect to participate on all or only part of the run if they wish.

Note* Current at March 2023 and maybe subject to change.

Runs are generally held on weekends over 2-3 days but can also be up to 6-7 days. Single weekend day events, such as in the Brisbane, Gympie, or Toowoomba area, are also held.

Does ASSCO charge any additional admin fee for runs.

No, we do not. On some class one high traffic lines a small extra insurance levy may be needed to cover the increased premiums required. It will be made well clear before the run what the levy will be and with a good turnout of membership participation the fee will be minimal.

What happens on a typical ASSCO run?

After returning their expression of interest form and paying their meet fees, members will arrive at the designated meeting point to set on track at the start of the first day. Participants will undergo a Pre-Brief Induction and Toolbox Safety Talk ensuring all participants are fully briefed about the days operations and safety requirements prior to entering the rail corridor. Leaving the starting destination, the group will travel throughout the day to the next township nominated to stay overnight. The convoy will stop at nominated locations for photos and lunch, with most runs stopping at townships that can provide food and fuel.

Upon arriving at the destination, a post trip Safety De-Brief will be conducted and members will stay overnight before setting out again the next day. Members will also generally share an afternoon drink and evening meal together at a local restaurant or hotel before retiring for the night.

Does ASSCO provide Accommodation?

ASSCO does not provide accommodation for overnight stays on runs and it is up to the member to arrange for themselves. However, members will generally stay in the same motel with many members happy to share a room with another member to reduce costs. It is the members choice as to where they wish to stay in the township. Some remote townships have limited accommodation, and this will be advised prior to the event, and generally organised as a group stay.

Who does what on a run?

Members. Have a good and safe time ensuring all rules and regulations are strictly followed. Your safety is our number one priority.

Meet Coordinator: Is tasked with the smooth operation by overseeing members and ensuring everything is in the right place at the right time. The Meet Coordinator will determine stops along the route in conjunction with the Safeworker and address any issues that may arise with members enroute.

Safeworker: The Safeworker is the railway qualified safeworking officer that oversees the movement of the section cars in accordance with railway procedures. The Safeworker will always ride on the lead section car and authorise the movement of the convoy in accordance with signal indications and train control. Safeworkers are generally ASSCO members who are employed by Queensland Rail or Aurizon and have significant experience in rail/train operations.

Protection Officer ensures corridor safety while ASSCO is on track.

Do ASSCO operate in areas where there are trains?

Yes. ASSCO operates on open railway lines where freight and mineral trains can exceed 8000t. Meet Coordinators, Safeworkers plus a Protection Officer continuously monitor the safety of members around other trains and their directions must be followed at all times.



What governs the operation of the Society?

The ASSCO management committee, constitution (2021), as well as our Safety Management System (SMS) listed rules, regulations, and procedures.

Code of Conduct.

ASSCO has a strict code of conduct that must always be adhered to. Members may have their membership reviewed if it is found they are bringing the club into disrepute by such things as illegal operation of Section Cars or other inappropriate behavior such as sexual harassment, bullying, member incitement, internal fraud, assault, smoking in the rail corridor, exceeding the alcohol limit, etc. A right of appeal exists, and due process will be always followed to ensure a fair and equitable outcome.

Can I make a suggestion about something or where I would like a run held?

Yes. ASSCO is a non-elitist member focused group so feedback is most welcome and regularly used to determine where ASSCO holds runs for members or where improvements can be made. ASSCO is truly owned by all the members and their highly valued and respected input is vital for ASSCO operations.

What is the prescribed alcohol limit on a run?

Members participating on a run must always have zero alcohol (0.00) in their system. Members exceeding this limit will be immediately excluded from any further participation in the event. ASSCO has qualified testers for drug and alcohol with regular tests undertaken during ASSCO events. Railway owners such as Aurizon and Queensland Rail have random drug and alcohol testing policies in place as well which also apply to ASSCO. Police can also breath-test participants in accordance with legislation.

I have further questions!

ASSCO welcomes all questions and membership inquiries. We looked forward to welcoming you 'On Track'

Email us at secretary@assco.com.au





