

# FOC sector reports and responses

## Periods 13 and 1

Period: 07/03/10 to 01/05/10			
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### 40881 'For cause' screening process not adhered to

A reporter is concerned that managers are not adhering to company standards regarding 'for cause' screening. Following an incident or accident, it is mandatory for the staff involved to be 'for caused' (screened for drugs and alcohol) and stood down from duty until the results of the screening come through. DB Schenker's standards permit managers to retain individuals at work if the initial investigation absolves them from any responsibility of causing the incident. However, the reporter is aware of instances when individuals have been allowed to remain at work before the screening results have been known. The reporter believes this goes against the company's own standard and potentially introduces risks to accidents or mistakes occurring. The reporter asks:

- could DB Schenker clarify the company's 'for cause' screening standards;
- can staff return to work before the results of the screening are known;
- if appropriate, could briefings be provided to Area Production Managers and other relevant levels?

### Response from DB Schenker

#### 1. *Could DB Schenker clarify the company's 'for cause' screening standards?*

Employees will be subject to screening for alcohol and drugs following any of the safety critical incidents listed below, if there is any reason to believe that their acts or omissions might have contributed to the causation:

- any accident resulting in a fatality or major injury;
- any collision between traction units and/or vehicles and/or depot doors/buffer stops;
- any derailment on or affecting running lines, or within depots, yards and sidings;
- any overhead line equipment isolation irregularity, or electric traction entering an isolated section;
- train preparation irregularities resulting in train braking deficiencies;
- excessive speed;
- damage to infrastructure affecting the integrity of running lines;
- employees will be automatically screened when involved in a signal passed at danger event;
- following any other accident or incident, if there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the effects of alcohol or drugs might have contributed to the accident or incident;
- where the behaviour and/or appearance of the employee gives cause to suspect that he or she is unfit for duty due to the effects of alcohol or drugs.

#### 2. *Can staff return to work before the results of the screening are known?*

Screening is carried out as soon as possible after the accident, incident or suspect behaviour, using the DB Schenker 'call out screening procedure'. The employee is relieved of duty and accompanied at all times until screening has been carried out. Normally the employee is not permitted to undertake any safety critical or other defined work until the results of screening is known. However, the employee may return to work subject to an informed and duly recorded management decision being made on the basis of the emerging facts that the person's actions or omissions did not contribute to the accident or incident.

#### 3. *If appropriate, could briefings be provided to Area Production Managers and other relevant levels?*

The D&A policy was changed in July 2009 and briefed out to our managers, copies are available to all staff via the company intranet.

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### 40947 Concerns about equipment and competencies at Margam Knuckle Yard

A reporter has raised a number of concerns about unsafe practices occurring at Margam Knuckle Yard where maintenance work on DB Schenker locomotives is carried out.

#### Equipment

The reporter believes that the jacks currently used for lifting wagons have not been well maintained and as a result are not fit for use. Also, the equipment does not appear to be completely weatherproof and there is concern that faulty equipment used in conditions they aren't designed for could lead to a safety incident occurring:

- could DB Schenker confirm if these jacks are in full working order;
- the reporter is aware that independent inspections are carried out on the equipment but unaware of how regular these will be. Could this be clarified;
- a suggestion is for weekly visual checks to be made by someone on the site to ensure the jacks are in full working order. Could this be done?

#### Competency

In order to operate forklifts of different weights staff must pass a competency test which is valid for two years, after which staff have to be reassessed. According to the reporter, staff at the yard are no longer competent and despite being aware of this, management are asking staff to do jobs where forklifts are involved:

- could DB Schenker ensure that all forklift drivers possess valid tickets before requesting staff to operate the machines?

### Response from DB Schenker

1. *Could DB Schenker confirm if these jacks are in full working order?*

The jacks used at Margam are in full working order, records and inspection certificates testify this and are held locally. Any jacks that fail inspection, or are not required, are subsequently omitted from the inspection and maintenance plan, and are quarantined and stored accordingly. Jacks required to be used outdoors have been weatherproofed and again, equipment that does not meet this standard is quarantined.

2. *The reporter is aware that independent inspections are carried out on the equipment but is unaware of how regular these will be. Could this be clarified?*

There is a robust inspection plan in place - lifting equipment is inspected at six monthly intervals and again, records held locally. The previous inspections were completed during January 2010.

3. *A suggestion is for weekly visual checks to be made by someone on the site to ensure the jacks are in full working order. Could this be done?*

All staff are trained and assessed in the use of this equipment and as part of the training/assessment package, there is a basic operator check completed at all times prior to the use of equipment by the individual. It must be emphasised that monthly checks are recorded by the local management, which covers the inspection of lifting equipment. In addition, senior management in the business complete safety tours, whilst safety representatives completed documented inspection on a three monthly basis, after which close out meetings take place.

4. *Could DB Schenker ensure that all forklift drivers possess valid tickets before requesting staff to operate the machines?*

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All forklift truck drivers receive formal training followed by 'on the job' training and assessment. This competency, for regular users, remains in place for three years when a further summary assessment is then completed and again then forms part of the next three year plan. Only when it is identified that the forklift driver is an irregular user (monthly) is the assessment reduced to every 18 months. On some occasions, when an accident or incident has been identified, a near miss or hazard reported, non-adherence to safe systems of working or the operator has been absent for a sustainable period of time, will an immediate assessment be completed. On receipt of this report, all training and assessment records have been checked and all operators at Margam are compliant to these standards, the next assessment period commences from April 2010.

### 40931 Build up of diesel fumes at Crewe maintenance depot

A reporter is concerned about inhaling diesel fumes that build up in the electric maintenance depot at Crewe. The depot has predominantly been used to maintain electric locomotives but in the last year diesel locomotives from Toton are also being maintained here. However, Crewe depot is not designed to run as a diesel shed as there are no extraction fans in the ceiling and the drains are only just able to cope with the oil.

Staff are concerned about inhaling diesel fumes that build up when locomotives are running in the shed due to the poor ventilation. The problem is particularly worse when locomotives are started up after a two to three week period of inactivity – the locomotives have oil pushed through their system and when the engine is started up, fumes and oil are generated going up to the roof and across the floor. It is understood that a scientific team has assessed the air quality in the shed but that this was conducted when no locomotives were running.

The reporter notes that there is a disused diesel depot at Crewe that was previously run by DB Schenker but is now inactive. One solution to the issue could be for diesel services to be operated from this old depot. Is this a possible solution? The reporter would like DB Schenker to consider installing a diesel fumes extraction system in this shed so that it is fit for maintaining both electric and diesel locomotives. Could this be installed?

### Response from DB Schenker

DB Schenker have contacted Scientifics with regard to carrying out a full noise and fume survey at both major depots (Crewe IEMD & Toton TMD), and we are currently awaiting confirmation of a date. These surveys will be carried out under normal working conditions to ensure that we are able to gauge the impact of the diesel fumes in the shed environment. Two specialist companies have recently visited both sites and are in the process of providing various options in relation to fume extraction and loco exhaust ventilation. These options will be considered following the receipt of the Scientifics report.

Oil is not dispensed into pit drains, however if a spillage occurs and oil does seep into the drains the depot interceptor removes any oil residue before outlet to the main sewer. There are no plans to re-instate the Crewe TMD site as further depot capacity is not currently required.

### 40964 Train crew facilities at Mossend 'intolerable'

A reporter would like to highlight the state of the facilities at Mossend depot used by Freightliner drivers. Some of the issues described are long-standing and date back six years.

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Hygiene is perceived to be at an 'all-time low' at the depot, but a health and safety poster up in the mess room states that there should be ventilation, electricity, heating and water for washing facilities.

At the time of reporting, there is no fresh running water in the building and the toilets are out of use. There is no hot water for staff to wash their hands - although hand sanitisers are provided, the reporter believes they are ineffective when used on dirty hands without a supply of water.

As a temporary measure, a tanker has been supplying water to the tank in the loft to provide a supply for the building. However, because the urinals use a considerable amount of water a decision was made not to flush them with water. In addition, the electricity generator occasionally cuts out leaving the building without lights. The reporter suggests that train crew could be moved to Coatbridge five miles away where these problems are not present. Please comment on whether there are any plans to tackle the underlying issues.

### **Response from Freightliner**

Please note that all facilities with regards to the water supply are now back in order. Freightliner had an issue recently with the water supply where, due to the severe weather, the pipes had frozen over and we could not identify where the route of the problem was. Therefore alternative arrangements had to be made to get another pipe installed and during this process had to arrange for a temporary supply. Freightliner can assure the reporter that all measures were taken to ensure that hygiene standards were not compromised.

With regards to the power supply we are currently active in trying to restore this back to normal. The recent issues we had with the generator were again due to the severe weather and the machine shut down on a couple of occasions due to the fuel freezing up and blocking the fuel filters, this subsequently shut down the generator. Again along with the company we were active in trying to rectify that problem and since then have had no further problems.

### **40956 Long travel times and fatigue for DB Schenker Subcontractor**

The fatigue generated by long commutes by Axiom subcontracting staff to DB Schenker sites is a concern for one reporter. Axiom staff often carry out safety critical work. The reporter is concerned that commutes of up to four hours in either direction on top of an eight hour shift greatly increase the risk of an accident at work, or on public roads.

The reporter believes that neither Axiom nor DB Schenker take this issue seriously enough, though both companies are aware of the arrangements. It is suggested that the 14 hour door to door recommendation set out in the *Network Rail Standard NR/GN/INI/001* is not exceeded. The reporter would like to know if both companies could work together to see the Standard fully implemented.

### **Response from DB Schenker**

Due to the nature of Axiom Rail's business it has been assumed that the question refers to Axiom Rail's activities in support of DB Schenker Network's contract with Network Rail. Axiom Rail guidance on working hours and travelling time is managed through *Standard Operating Procedure 109*:

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- staff are all briefed on the need for compliance with *SOP 109* and any additional requirements on a regular basis;
- all shifts are planned and controlled by the responsible Fleet Manager and a dedicated Roster Administrator in accordance the policy. Shifts are never planned to exceed 12 hours. Accommodation is arranged where appropriate in order to comply;
- work time (including travelling) is planned not to exceed 12 hours in any 24 hour period. Any unplanned exceedance arising (adverse weather, traffic or possession delay) requires the prior authorisation of the DB Schenker Duty Manager;
- individual employee exceedances are recorded in the DB Schenker daily report which is reviewed and investigated on a daily basis by Axiom Rail management;
- travel time is planned, controlled and managed within the 12 hours shift. Should a door to door shift exceed 12 hours and the exceedance is not authorised by the DB Schenker Duty Manager the employee will have accommodation arranged;
- Axiom Rail operates a system of fatigue monitoring which ensures that employees are regularly monitored for fatigue and the results are subject to periodic senior management review.

Axiom Rail takes employee fatigue very seriously and reviews all procedures on a regular basis in order to ensure and improve the safety of its employees.