

FOC sector reports and responses

Period: 23/08/09 to 17/10/09			
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Contents

40854 Walking route, lights and electrical fault at Mossend depot.....	3
40857 East Coast route knowledge and train handling	4
40802 PTS assessment procedure not being followed	5
40660 Length of turns and PNBs	5
40793 Lack of toilet facilities and PNBs for Heavy Haul.....	6

40854 Walking route, lights and electrical fault at Mossend depot

A reporter has highlighted three separate safety concerns about Freightliner's Mossend depot.

1. Walking route and access road - The reporter states that the walking route and access road into the depot at Cardean Road from Holytown Road is unlit and full of deep pot holes with no proper path for pedestrians. During icy weather this is dangerous as there are slip, trip and fall (STF) hazards present and no salt is being put on this road. The reporter believes that as Freightliner have stated that this road is the official route to the depot, they are responsible for ensuring staff are able to arrive and leave safely from the depot.

Could Freightliner, DB Schenker and Network Rail clarify exactly who is responsible for maintaining this road? Could the responsible party address the STF hazards present on this access route?

2. Tower lights at Moss End sidings - The reporter states that the tower lights at Mossend sidings have not worked for quite a few years. As there is no flood lighting, staff are using hand lamps when carrying out coupling and locomotive work. Walking around the sidings is also difficult as the tower lights should light the entire sidings, again presenting STF hazards.

Could Freightliner, DB Schenker and Network Rail state whether they are responsible for fixing the tower lights? Could the responsible party fix the lights to ensure staff can carry out their work safely?

3. Electrical fault - The train crew accommodation building has had problems with the power supply for the past couple of years, with electricity tripping out at least three of four times a month. When this happens, there is no lighting, heating and hot water, the fire alarm system is disarmed and all equipment reliant on an electricity source, such as computers and phones, do not work. This is particularly problematic for night workers as no emergency lights come on in place of the main ones. The problem started after an arson attack on another building which houses the electricians for the train crew accommodation. Since then, the electricity supply has run off a generator and every time there is a cut, the trip switch is simply reset but the actual problem is not addressed.

Since there has been an increased frequency of tripping in the past few months, the reporter would like to see Freightliner take steps to find a long term solution.

Response from Freightliner

1. Walking Routes and Access Road - This road does not belong to Freightliner nor any other train operating company. I believe the road belongs to the Scottish Development Agency who in my opinion do not take any responsibility for anything happening on the road as I myself have tried to complain about unsafe acts committed by private businesses on the road.

I do not know whether we have any rights to carry out repairs on the road as we have access rights only, although over the years we have **had** to carry out repairs and this includes **recent** actions to fill in the holes etc. on the road.

With regards to salting in winter conditions I can assure you that the car park and pathways are indeed salted as this is done by myself and the Senior Drivers Standards Manager.

2. Tower Lights at Mossend - Since joining Freightliner approx. five years ago the tower lights have not been working, and only until recently after many years of debating the responsibility of the tower lights at our liaison group meetings with Network Rail and other companies it has only just been established that this does indeed lie with Network Rail.

However I further believe that until the electrical situation is resolved at Mossend there will be an issue with the power supply although I will raise this again with them for action.

3. Electrical Fault - This has been an on-going saga since a fire at Mossend approx. two and a half years ago burnt out the electrical power supply facility for not only our depot but the supply for DB Schenker.

Since then we have been running off a generator and **only recently** we suffered a few problems with the circuit breakers in the buildings tripping, however in the last few weeks after some minor repairs it seems to be rectified.

40857 East Coast route knowledge and train handling

Route knowledge and train handling experience is lacking for Freightliner drivers on the East Coast line, according to one reporter. Freightliner uses the West Coast line for most of their operations, but occasionally - for example, when there is engineering work – operations are diverted along the East Coast line between Carstairs and York. But when drivers are expected to work this route in such circumstances, they often feel neither safe nor comfortable. There are no timetabled services on this route, so drivers will rarely drive it.

Some drivers have been asked to drive the route when they haven't done so for over a year. Refresher training for route knowledge is normally required every six months to keep a driver up to date. If a driver voices concern over this, a journey up or down the route with an instructor may be arranged, but only in a locomotive in daylight, rather than a fully loaded train.

In the reporter's view, it is critical to gain the train handling experience on the West Coast line in order to gauge the feel of a 1,400 tonne train on the different gradients of a particular route, and gain firsthand experience of the stopping distances involved.

Being comfortable with the reality of driving at night along an unfamiliar route is also thought to be important, though it is not currently factored in to Freightliner's approach to route learning.

The reporter suggests that:

- route knowledge for the West Coast line is refreshed every six months for drivers who may be expected to work it;
- train handling experience and night driving be incorporated into learning; and
- Freightliner consider the possibility running a timetabled service on the West Coast line to give drivers the route knowledge and train handling experience they need.

Response from Freightliner

With regards to route knowledge and train handling experience on the east coast, our drivers are refreshed over the route twice a year to maintain route knowledge, although we try to keep this strictly to six monthly this is not always possible due to working constraints, however we do not ask drivers to work over this route if the six month period lapses.

The norm for any route learning or revision is carried out utilising one of our services, but as this is not possible due to no fixed train services over the route, our driving instructor at Mossend is utilised and accompanies all drivers over a two day period over the route, this is normally carried out during daylight hours to identify to the drivers any changes to route risks or characteristics etc as per the the *Train Crew Manual*.

As we do not work trains over the route unless an emergency situation arises, then there is the obvious difficulty of lack of train handling, however this must also be said for the many other diversionary routes throughout the whole rail network for all the rail operators.

40802 PTS assessment procedure not being followed

A reporter is concerned about PTS assessments procedure at DB Schenker. There has been a recent incident whereby answers to the PTS assessment questionnaire were provided to the person taking the assessment by their manager, also their assessor.

The reporter is concerned that if this occurred with someone who was new to the rail industry or wasn't aware of the potential safety risks then they may end up making mistakes and put their own and others' safety at risk. Shortcuts are being taken with PTS assessments which could compromise the safety of those on or about the line, according to the reporter. This also means that staff are not learning and being assessed as they should be.

The reporter believes the reason for such incidents happening is that assessments are carried out at the depots by managers who are familiar with those on the training course. With training becoming more in-house, such issues with assessments may become more common.

Suggestions put forward by the reporter are for PTS assessments to occur away from the staff member's home depot or for external assessors to be sent to the depot. Is this possible? Please comment.

Response from DB Schenker

DBS are extremely concerned by this allegation. It goes without saying that for a manager to provide the answers to staff during any kind of assessment is wrong. We are unable to identify what may be an individual training need due to the anonymous nature of this report so we have made all our local managers aware of the content of this report and reminded them of the safety implications that this type of behaviour can have.

The only re-assessments undertaken at depots are for staff whose competency incorporates PTS such as drivers and GSTM. All other staff are required to be re-assessed by ops or engineering trainers working centrally for the DBS HR team. We are audited externally on our processes for delivering PTS training and re-assessment and cannot afford to take any shortcuts.

40660 Length of turns and PNBs

A reporter would like to highlight two concerns regarding the shift design for certain turns and the facilities on offer during personal needs breaks (PNBs).

Firstly, the reporter is concerned about the length of some turns and the potential they have to cause fatigue for drivers, especially if there is then a requirement to drive a company van back to the depot, before driving back home. One particular example is turn RY47 from Rugby to

Neasden. This is an 11 hour shift, which includes driving a van from Neasden back to Rugby during the morning rush hour, and then driving home. For many drivers this is a strain and increases the chance of having an accident on public roads.

The reporter suggests that risk assessments should include van driving, in addition to train driving. At the moment, there appears to be no way of differentiating in fatigue terms between an 11 hour turn, and an 11 hour turn plus four hours of driving. This doesn't make sense under closer scrutiny.

Secondly, the reporter is concerned about the lack of available facilities when drivers need to take their PNBs. This is apparent at locations such as Acton, Croft, Brierley Hill, Neasden and Cricklewood. Drivers are rostered on for 11 hour shifts on a train and are said to be able to take PNBs at a convenient time – however, access to a PNB facility is not provided. Please comment.

Response from Freightliner

The maximum length of any diagram is 12 hours and this can include vehicle driving. Motor vehicle driving times are calculated for diagrams but on occasions it may take longer to travel back by road due to unforeseen circumstances. At a large majority of customers premises PNB facilities are made available for Freightliner Heavy Haul staff if they choose to use these. Toilet facilities are available at all sites and if a driver has to take a PNB in his cab flasks and fresh wipes are supplied.

40793 Lack of toilet facilities and PNBs for Heavy Haul

A reporter would like to highlight the lack of toilet facilities on personal needs breaks (PNBs), where heavy haul drivers have to remain with the engine. Most of the time, it is simply not possible to have a PNB away from the cab. The lack of a toilet and running water creates a personal hygiene problem. Though the intention is to supply wet wipes, despite repeated requests, some depots have not been providing them, significantly increasing the likelihood that germs will be transferred to the train's controls. The next driver to use the train would then have to touch unhygienic controls. Hands can also get particularly dirty when gloves are not provided for such tasks as uncoupling engines.

In a normal working environment, a toilet and somewhere to wash hands is provided. The response when this issue is raised is that it isn't possible to provide facilities for Heavy Haul train diagrams on the infrastructure side, where the nature of the work takes drivers a long way from recognised facilities. But a lack of basic facilities – and an inability to leave the cab - is particularly tiring for drivers who must listen to the continual background engine noise. Fatigue is exacerbated by shifts that can be 11 hours long.

The reporter would ideally like to see the provision of adequate facilities away from the cab on PNBs for Heavy Haul drivers. Failing that, could the adequate provision of wet wipes and gloves be ensured at all depots?

Response from Freightliner

As all Freight drivers know who work infrastructure sites you can end up a long way from the PNB facilities, Freightliner Heavy Haul do supply gloves and wipes for all drivers. Any shortage of this equipment must be reported to their line manager, supplies only take around 24 hours to be delivered from our suppliers so stocks can be replenished in a very short time.