

LUL and sub-LUL sector reports and responses

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40803 Staff working days in the office and nights on track causing fatigue

CIRAS has received a report about staff working during the day in the office and then going out to do work on track at night. A reporter is concerned that staff are working seven or eight hours during the day and then working four or six hours at night, out on track, with only a six hour rest period in between. During the day staff are carrying out safety critical work concerning the upgrade of the signalling system for the Jubilee, Northern and Piccadilly lines, and at night are carrying out these works on site.

This situation is causing staff to become fatigued and the reporter believes this could lead to someone making a mistake, which could compromise the safety of the others.

Could Thales:

- remind staff that they should have a minimum of 11 hours rest between shifts as stated by the *Working Time Directive 2003*; and
- review time/shift sheets to ensure that staff are receiving this period of rest?

Response from Thales

Thales would like to thank CIRAS and the reporter for bringing this issue to our attention and confirm that allegations of this nature are taken very seriously and are always investigated as thoroughly as possible. Unfortunately, due to the lack of details provided in the report, regarding dates, times and individuals involved, Thales has been unable to ascertain and verify any facts regarding the specific incident referred to by the reporter.

However, Thales has undertaken a review of timesheets submitted for recent weeks on the Jubilee, Northern and Piccadilly line project and further examined all those where 40 hours or more has been claimed. I am pleased to report that in general, the timesheets scrutinised confirmed that the Thales policy setting out the working time directive and the requirements of *QUENSH section 20.1.2* have been observed.

The review did highlight a small number of cases where the hours claimed or the number of shifts recorded either came close to or did exceed the requirements. As a result of this review, an Internal memo has been sent to all Thales and sub contractor's staff reminding them of the Thales policy, the *Working Time Directive* and *QUENSH* conditions requirements.

In addition, the following remedial actions have been undertaken or are in progress:

- a copy of the working time memo will be posted on our company Intranet, which is visible whenever staff access the system;
- Thales 'New Starter' Induction briefing pack will be revised to give greater visibility and clarity of the working time requirements. Staff retain this pack for their reference;
- exceedance reports will be generated and reviewed/discussed on a periodic basis;
- line managers will be informed of trends in excessive working so that action can be taken where necessary; and
- our internal audit programme will give particular focus to compliance with the working time policy.

Thales trusts that all of the above is in order. However, in the event that any further information is required, please do not hesitate to contact us.

40785 Safety during possessions

A reporter is concerned that protection masters are being forced to carry out strenuous tasks for which they are not trained. During weekend possessions along the Watford branch of the Metropolitan line, a number of issues deemed to be safety critical have been highlighted including:

- a lack of initial briefings and no method statements provided;
- unsuitability and scarcity of track tools;
- lights on hard hats not available for the work which is being carried out at night, with some staff resorting to using their mobile phones as a source of light;
- workers only being permitted a brief rest while moving from one task to another, which does not adhere to the *Working Time Directive* guidelines of a 20 minute break after every six hours of work; and
- drinking water not being provided.

The reporter has also pointed out that there are no track trolleys available to help move track cables. This consequently means that protection masters will be carrying heavy cables for as much as 300 metres. Whilst there is no written standard on this, it is stated that this lifting and carrying should be done to the capability of the worker. Additionally, there should be a trained trolley operator to manoeuvre these trolleys who the reporter does not believe is present.

A number of safety consequences, from minor injuries to major incidents can result from inadequate briefings, poor lighting, lack of track trolleys and all other mentioned issues.

Can LUL please look into the each of the above claims made by the reporter to ensure that there are working rules and regulations are being adhered to?

Response from LUL

The sub contractor use protection staff for their works but do not employ them directly. During the weekend possession in question, protection staff were informed by management that they would only be using them as platelayers/labourers to utilise their ST1 tickets.

Following the CIRAS report a full planned general inspection (PGI) was carried out by the LU project HSE Advisor on this sub contractor and no major issues were found.

In response to the specific issues raised during the weekend possession in question, we report as follows:

- All pre possession briefings are undertaken by LU. Work briefings were carried out by the sub contractor's Lead Site Person in Charge (SPC) at Croxley before anyone was given access to the track or work site.
- All approved method statements were in the SPC folder as requested by LU, which is currently available at the sub contractor's office. This has been verified by the PGI inspection on 1 August 2009 carried out by the LU project HSE Advisor.
- This sub contractor has been inspected several times by LU and there have been no issues raised regarding tools and their suitability.
- Regarding lighting, on the work site in question, there was 110 volt link lighting the full length of the work area. There have been some issues with MRIS staff not all having

hard hat lights but this is not the case with the sub contractor's staff who all wear lights on their hard hats. It should be pointed out that it is the responsibility of all individuals to ensure that they have a light in order to walk to site and for carrying out some tasks.

- Staff have never complained about not taking rest breaks; rest periods are organised by the SPC. There are circumstances when the sub contractor staff have to wait for long periods of time in between others' work before they can connect the cables which means they are resting even though it is not considered an 'official' break.
- Drinking water, canned drinks and meals were supplied by MRIS but due to the very hot weather, the drinks ran out. However, the on-site Operational Manager gave his staff money to buy drinks from the local shops.
- This sub contractor has and continues to have trained Track Trolley Operatives in attendance throughout the Metropolitan DC Power Upgrade works. On this occasion, cables were initially moved by track trolleys up to a certain point where there was a stationary RRV that could not be moved due to a mechanical failure. From there, the cables had to be carried by hand. Around the worksite, there were nine people available who were deemed sufficient to move 18m cables.