

Network Rail and sub-Network Rail sector reports and responses

Periods 13 and 1

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40869 Concerns about the new RT9909 COSS forms

A reporter has contacted CIRAS with a number of concerns about the information given and usability of the new version of the RT9909 COSS forms.

Information:

- the telephone number listed on the forms for local signal boxes is a direct line to the Box Supervisor and not to the Signaller controlling the panel. The reporter believes this could waste valuable time if an incident were to arise where a signal needed changing quickly;
- sighting distance times have also created confusion for some members of staff as recalculations need to be made if additional Look-outs are needed. The reporter comments that there is no room on the form for any calculations to be made or new distances to be stated;
- the hazard section of the form is another source of confusion, as it always seems to contain the red zone permitted working area. The reporter is concerned that this could lead users who are new to the form, thinking they are working in a red zone even if outside the worksite;
- the hazard directory and sectional appendices do not always match and the sectional appendices chosen in the planning process are not always attached to the form;
- the system requires resources such as Site Wardens and Look-outs to be entered at the planning stage, but this information is absent from the final print out;
- there is no information for staff on the form about locations or telephone numbers of local hospitals;
- the start or finish time of the job is not shown on the form;
- there is also no room on the form to note the first-aider on site or where the first aid kit is located.

Usability:

- the reporter comments that staff attending COSS training courses are not being trained on the new version of the form, they are instead learning about the old version. The old version of the form is still shown in the Network Rail '*Rule Book*' despite the new version of the form being in use for approximately a year;
- the reporter finds the layout of the final printed document to be confusing, vague and not user friendly;
- the form does not have a section for amendments to be made or to record any changes once the document has been printed.

Could Network Rail please:

- comment on each of the above points;
- consider addressing the concerns about the new RT9909 COSS forms; and
- explain why staff are still being trained on the old version of the form and why it is still featured in the Network Rail '*Rule Book*'?

Response from Network Rail

Network Rail would like to thank the reporter for bringing their concerns to our attention. We have considered the points raised and after consulting with technical experts have produced the following responses based on the version of the RT9909 provided in the *Safe System of Work Planning System (SSOWPS)*.

1. The direct line to the Shift Signaller Manager (Signal Box Supervisor) is the preferred option due to the volume of work that the Signaller has to deal with - signalling trains,

- and dealing with other people on the phone. The Shift Signaller Manager has the ability to judge if the Signaller has the required time to take the call based on their workload at the time. If it was an emergency situation the Shift Signaller Manager can assist the Signaller in making the railway safe if the need arises, or override what they are currently doing to take the appropriate action to make the railway safe.
2. The use of the sighting and distance charts are taught on the COSS training course and when in the workplace a newly qualified COSS can seek the assistance of their mentor to help them.
 3. If the COSS considers that there is not enough space to make any amendments on the form, they have the option of completing a new *RT9909 form*. They could use a different colour ink than on the form to show the amended details more clearly.
 4. The form is designed to provide the COSS and the group with site safety details they require to work safely. The *RT9909 form* is used for green and red zone working and the inclusion of red zone details provides the COSS, with a complete understanding of the area they are going to work in or next to. If a COSS does not think the inclusion of the red zone permitted working area is required, they should tell the Section Manager. If the reasons for not including the details are justified, then the Planner can be notified for future work planned for that area.
 5. The theory and the practical use of the form are taught on the COSS training course, giving the COSS adequate time to learn how to use the form. A new COSS is also mentored following their initial training and will have the opportunity to ask their mentor for clarification on content and completion of any forms they may be required to use.
 6. The COSS pack produced for the *Safe System of Work (SSoW)* is required to be checked by the Section Manager and by the COSS in charge of the work, prior to any work taking place. If they notice anything that is not correct or missing from the pack they should highlight the items they want adding and/or changing, and return it to the Planner for the corrections to be made.
 7. As part of the COSS brief, prior to the work commencing, the COSS is required to brief the group on all safety related information. This includes who the group's first aid qualified person is and the relevant contact details for the emergency services or signal boxes, for example. If the group consider they have not received the correct safety brief information, they are required to tell the COSS who will provide them with the appropriate information they need.
 8. The *RT9909 form* is a record of the site safety and briefing form. The *RT3181 Line Blockage Form (T12/T2)* will have entered on it the start and finish time of the work taking place by the COSS.
 9. The form used on the COSS training course is the *Rule Book* version of the *RT9909*. The version that is produced by the *SSOWPS* contains all the required site safety and briefing arrangements as required by *Safety of People Working on or Near the Line NR/L2/OHS/019* and the *Rule Book GE/RT80*. But this was enhanced to include the calculation of red zone working as requested by infrastructure maintenance at the time the *SSOWPS* was developed.
 10. The layout of the *RT9909* is designed to provide the COSS with sufficient information to brief the group in an appropriate manner. The COSS, if required, can supplement the information provided on the form for the safety of their group, which may for example include more details about the access and egress from the site.
 11. The *RT9909 form* in the COSS pack should be the final version of the form from which the COSS will implement the safe system of work to allow the work to take place. If the COSS for some reason has to change the safe system of work, they should either amend the form or complete a new form. COSSs should carry blank copies of all forms they potentially might need, to use for any unplanned work they may be required to do.

The layout and content of the *RT9909 form* is currently under review as part of a wider review of the *RIMINI* process and *NR/L2/OHS/019*. The reporter's comments and this reply will be provided to the team undertaking the review, points for consideration.

40899 Staff working 'excessive' consecutive shifts

A reporter is concerned about staff from a recruitment agency working a large number of consecutive shifts. The reporter is aware of some staff working up to and over 20 consecutive shifts before receiving a 24 hour rest period. Staff are carrying out safety critical work and the reporter is concerned that an accident may happen on site due to someone being fatigued. In accordance with the *Working Time Directive (2003)* staff are entitled to 24 hours uninterrupted rest each week or 48 hours each fortnight. The reporter believes that staff are being rostered to work these 'excessive' shifts and therefore the rosters will show this. These agency staff carry out work on both Network Rail and LUL infrastructure.

For Network Rail and LUL:

- the reporter would like both companies to carry out an audit on this recruitment agency. Could this be done?;

Response from Network Rail

Network Rail would like to thank the reporter for bringing their concerns to our attention, however, unless more specific information can be provided; approaching this recruitment agency directly to instigate an audit without supporting evidence would be difficult.

Network Rail does not issue an operating license for the labour supply company in question. In circumstances such as these Network Rail rely on those who issue the service providers with their licence i.e. Achilles to monitor and audit their members.

Achilles issue link-up acceptance and regularly audit their members under a strict regime. Achilles completed an audit of this recruitment agency last year but found no inconsistencies. The auditor confirmed that after the audit this company had an *Hours of Work Policy*, the contents of the document was satisfactory, and that arrangements in place satisfied industry requirements. So, with specific information Network Rail would be in a better position to directly contact this agency to investigate further.

Response from Recruitment Agency

We 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. I am pleased to report that in general, the timesheets scrutinised confirmed that our policy setting out the *Working Time Directive* has been observed.

The investigation did highlight a small number of cases where the hours claimed or the number of shifts recorded did exceed the requirements within the Network Rail department. It was also highlighted that within our organisation, a certain individual who was managing the Network Rail department had been unprofessional. As a result of this investigation we have changed management personnel; all the sponsored Network Rail operatives have signed the company's *Hours of Work Policy*. A tool box talk has been issued to the operatives (and signed for) in one section reminded the Network Rail operatives that they could only work 13 consecutive shifts (prior to this being signed off/sanctioned by senior management).

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

- Company *Hours of Work Policy* updated to include the requirements of *QUENSH sec 20.1.2* and Network Rail standards;
- a copy of the *Working Time Policy* posted on our company intranet and issued to ALL sponsored operatives;
- implemented a weekly assignment sheet to capture the shift patterns planned;
- this sheet will also record a weekly summary of hours worked which includes shift patterns, hours worked and travel time;
- exceedance reports will be generated and reviewed/discussed on a periodic basis;
- Shift Managers will be informed of trends in excessive working so that action can be taken where necessary;
- our internal audit programme will give particular focus to compliance with the working time policy.

Response from LUL

LUL employ this recruitment agency as a protection supplier and as part of the contract they have a duty to ensure that their company *Hours of Work* policy is adhered to. Investigations have identified the monitoring of individual hours/shifts was not followed. The agency have since implemented a number of checks to ensure compliance with LUL *QUENSH* and Network Rail standards such as timesheets, weekly assignment sheets and an internal audit programme which will focus on the *Working Time Policy* which has been posted on the company's intranet.

Ad-hoc checks will be undertaken by LUL management to ensure compliance with the requirements of *QUENSH* and Network Rail standards and also to check against the recommendations made by the recruitment agency in response to the CIRAS report.

40907 Cess pathways across the country 'need attention'

A reporter is concerned about the current approach by Network Rail to the maintenance of cess pathways, which is viewed as reactive rather than proactive. In the south west region, the reporter says many issues - such as overgrown vegetation and scrap rail - are repeatedly reported by track workers at safety meetings but result in no action being taken until there is an incident of some sort. It is believed that this is a nationwide problem, and therefore requires a national rather than regional response. The reporter estimates that over 80% of cess pathways suffer from such issues and that this has a direct impact on safety.

Because scrap rail is sometimes abandoned beside the track in the cess, and vegetation can encroach on it, track workers may find themselves having to step into the four foot to see where they are going. Though it is acknowledged that some clearance work is carried out, this appears to be infrequent and largely reactive, rather than systematic. The reporter would like to see a much more proactive approach being taken across the country, with vegetation effectively cut back and scrap rail removed as part of ongoing infrastructure maintenance. Please comment.

Response from Network Rail

Network Rail would like to thank the reporter for bringing their concerns to our attention. The profile of materials management has been raised recently throughout the maintenance function via Route Infrastructure Maintenance Directors (RIMDs), and a suite of measures to incentivise materials clearance is now in place and under development. These include financial incentives for Delivery Units (DUs) to clear scrap rail (£150/T regardless of market

price); environmental targets being developed for recovery of all scrap metal (not just rail); and crediting DUs with safety league points for clearing 'small items' presenting a hazard. In addition the risk of lineside materials will be reiterated at the next Investment Projects Environmental Manager's meeting.

On the issue of proactive vegetation management we are continuing to improve in this area and are in the process of developing route-based action plans to achieve a standard systematic approach to vegetation clearance. If the caller wishes to highlight a specific issue or area we will be happy to investigate further and take any necessary action.

40902 Flank Protection still used 'under a new name'

Following a previous CIRAS report (issue 28) querying the use of Flank Protection (FP) on junctions instead of detonators within T3 possessions in the Anglia route. Several reporters have come to CIRAS saying that the practice is still occurring. This is despite Network Rail's response stating that the practice would no longer be used after June 2009.

Since June, the term 'flank protection' has not been used in Weekly Operating Notices (WONs). However, the WONs now state "*points to be kept normal with a reminder appliance as protection*". Although the word "flank" is not now used, flank protection arrangements are still in place in all but name.

The reporters are concerned that failure to comply with *Rule Book module T3* is still being encouraged. Also, neither is it covered in training or assessment exercises for the Person In Charge of Possession (PICOP). They would like to know:

- if the protection arrangements in the Anglia route could change to comply with the *Rule Book* and with the original Network Rail response;
- if this is not possible, could a deviation from *Railway Group Standards* be applied for with a certificate for derogation be issued?

Response from Network Rail

Network Rail would like to thank the reporter for bringing their concerns to our attention. Following on from this report there has been a discussion with the responsible teams that manage and plan such work and publications. Assurances have been given that this practice has been stopped. This issue will be monitored closely by the Operations and Customer Services Team locally to make certain that no repeat instances occur. It is our sincere hope that there will be no further occurrences of this practice.

In regard to the second point raised, as a result of the statement above there will be no plan to apply for derogation as there should be no requirement.

40937 Lack of on site facilities in Sussex and Wessex

A reporter has contacted CIRAS about inadequate time provided for Personal Needs Breaks (PNB's) to be taken and the lack of basic facilities provided by Network Rail for staff working trackside in the Sussex and Wessex areas. There are two issues:

- the reporter mentions instances when staff have been on a 12 hour shift, and have only been able to take 10 minutes of the rostered full hour's break;
- in contrast to subcontractors that the reporter has previously worked for, there appears to be a difference in the provision of on site facilities. The reporter has worked on Network Rail sites where facilities have not been provided for staff to

wash their hands or use a toilet. If work is taking place where such amenities are not available, the reporter feels that portable toilets should be provided by Network Rail.

Please comment.

Response from Network Rail

Network Rail would like to thank the reporter for bringing their concerns to our attention. It is unacceptable for anyone to be asked to work continuously for a period of 12 hours with only a reported break of 10 minutes. Rest or meal breaks are essential in reducing the risk from fatigue that might otherwise create the potential for mistakes, accidents or incidents.

Occasionally due to operational constraints - for example when responding to emergencies, infrastructure failures or during a critical element of an activity - it might be necessary to ask members of a team to delay taking a break. However, the team leader, supervisor or other person in charge should arrange for the rostered break to be taken at the next earliest opportunity.

We all have a shared responsibility for safety and on occasion, perhaps where the person in charge may have become preoccupied with the work activity, it may be necessary to remind the supervisor if this arises. Network Rail would like to reassure the reporter that issues of this nature are taken very seriously and we will issue a suitable reminder to our Team Leaders, Supervisors etc.

With respect to the provision of welfare facilities, unlike infrastructure project sites, it is a feature of infrastructure maintenance that the majority of the work undertaken falls within what is called "transient activities" i.e. where the scope of work is such, that there is a small number of personnel involved and the duration is relatively short (typically one or two days). In the above situation full welfare facilities were made available at the booking on/off point in a maintenance depot. It is usual to have one of these facilities in use during the rostered break or on occasion, use of facilities in an adapted vehicle.

Additionally, each delivery unit (depot) has identified local facilities that can be used across their infrastructure. These will typically include facilities at stations, signal boxes or other infrastructure but may also include public facilities, garage or shop toilets. As part of the planning for the particular activity, the Team Leader or Supervisor responsible for the works/activity will have knowledge of the relevant facilities that have been identified. On those occasions where either the number of staff employed is significant and/or the work activity is of a longer duration, it is a requirement of our works planning arrangements to provide suitable and sufficient welfare facilities.

40938 Slip,trip and fall hazard when cutting vegetation at night

A reporter is concerned about staff slipping, tripping or falling when cutting down vegetation at night due to the underfoot conditions. Staff often work up embankments along the side of the track, which can be quite steep. During icy, wet or snowy weather the underfoot conditions can be slippery making it very difficult for staff to climb or walk along the embankment when cutting vegetation. The risks are amplified by the work being carried out at night. Although the track area is fully lit staff only have hand lamps to see where they are walking and working, adding to the potential slip, trip or fall risk.

The reporter would like to see more vegetation clearance work being carried out during the day to help alleviate the problem. The reporter does understand that on busy lines such work

can only be carried out at night but feels this is becoming more commonplace instead of being the exception. Please comment.

Additional information: This is a problem in the Barnsley, Doncaster, Gainsborough, Rotherham and Sheffield areas.

Response from Network Rail

Network Rail would like to thank the reporter for raising their concerns regarding this issue. Whilst every effort is made to plan this work during daylight hours, there are occasions when working at night is unavoidable. Due to the nature of the tasks carried out, this type of work can only be carried out in green zones, and in some cases it is only possible to work when there are no trains running and necessitates night time working.

Where it is necessary to work in darkness suitable lighting is provided as per the *Task Risk Control* sheet *NR/L3/MTC/0001/GH003*. Prior to any work starting on site an inspection during daylight is carried out to identify and minimise any potential risks.

If the weather conditions are such that underfoot conditions are slippery or icy, then measures such as the use of grit or salt are taken to provide a safe working area. If conditions change on the night, the person in charge of the work is required to stop and re-assess the work and make changes where required.

A recent trial into the provision of lighting on sites where chainsaws are in operation has shown that with suitable lighting the light levels are higher than those encountered in a typical indoor office environment. We would like to remind the reporter that if they are in any doubt about working safely they should not hesitate to use the *Worksafe Procedure*.

40948 Potholed access path in Inverness

A reporter is concerned about slip, trip and fall hazards on the access road and walking route at Needlefield Yard in Inverness. The reporter is concerned about potholes - some of which are eight inches deep and two feet wide - all along the official walking route. The road is approximately 300 yards long and 25 yards wide and is used by Network Rail and DB Schenker staff.

Adverse weather conditions have made it difficult to repair recently. According to the reporter some remedial work has been carried out previously, but this hasn't addressed the issue satisfactorily. The reporter suggests that the whole area should be covered with tarmac to make it safe for pedestrians and vehicles. Please comment on the likely timescales for any planned maintenance work.

Response from Network Rail

Network Rail would like to thank the reporter for bringing their concerns to our attention. We take matters of staff safety very seriously and will always take action to remove or mitigate all risks to our staff.

The road at Needlefield Yard, Inverness is shared by both Network Rail and DB Schenker. Your reporter is correct in the statement that repairs had previously been carried out on this road; unfortunately the repairs did not go as far as providing a tarmac cover, but did repair all pot holes and the underfoot conditions. The adverse weather has taken its toll and the road now requires repairs to bring it back to a satisfactory standard.

The site was visited in February 2010 and it was agreed that repairs to the road would be carried out. This will consist of all pot holes being filled by April 2010 and a separate walk way being constructed from the road (this should be completed by May 2010). The Infrastructure Maintenance Delivery Manager will be contacting all stakeholders to further plans for the tarmac covering, which would undoubtedly be the best permanent fix. The actual agreement and dates for completion have at this time still to be agreed, but nonetheless the immediate issue of repairing the pot holes and pedestrian walk way, is now nearly completed and will remove the risk of slips, trips and falls.

40954 Signalling and Telecommunications (S&T) work being carried out around live conductor rails

A reporter is concerned about staff carrying out S&T maintenance work at night around live conductor rails. This type of work was previously carried out during the day by taking a possession on the line where the work was to be carried out. The reporter understands the disruption this can cause and that work can be carried out at night.

However, the reporter fears that the risk already present from working around live conductor rails during the day, is amplified at night due to staff not being able to see where they are walking. Underfoot conditions are sometimes created by the weather, add to this concern.

Could Network Rail address the following:

- the reporter suggests that the conductor rails are switched off whilst staff are working around them - could this be done;
- are factors such as underfoot conditions and the weather taken into account when staff are carrying out work around live rails;
- what type(s) of protection is required when S&T maintenance work is being carried out and what are the differences in requirements between daytime and night time work?

Response from Network Rail

Network Rail would like to thank the reporter for bringing their concerns to our attention. Network Rail have assessed all the tasks within the *Ellipse Work Management System* associated with working near conductor rails and placed them into five risk level categories. This process is described in the company standard *NR/L3/MTC/EP0152 Working On or Adjacent to Conductor Rails*. A complete copy of the DC risk assessed Ellipse standard job list together with their rankings is available on the Network Rail intranet 'Connect' (*SMF/EP/0245*).

The controls for working adjacent to a conductor rail are dependant on the distance from the conductor rail, and are described in the company *Risk Control Manual* under the *Task Risk Control Sheets (GA020)*. These describe the level of protection from a full isolation to working with conductor rail sheilds. The *Risk Control Manual* also has *Task Risk Control sheets* covering *Working in Darkness (GH003)* and *Adverse Weather Conditions (GH005)*.

As part of the Team Leader's brief (or COSS's) prior to the commencement of work, hazards need to be identified to staff and the staff's understanding to be checked. If you have concerns over any safe system of work, after considering all the control measures that are in place, you should use the *Worksafe Procedure* to highlight your concerns immediately

40955 Toilet waste on tracks in the south west

Toilet waste discharged by First Great Western (FGW) trains onto the tracks between Plymouth and Penzance is a cause of concern for a reporter who is routinely exposed to it in his work. The problem exists because some of the older trains operated by FGW flush waste directly onto the track. Newer trains utilise a tank system which contains the waste before it is emptied so that it never finds its way onto the track.

The reporter says that overalls worn by track workers can quickly become contaminated by the spray from passing trains. This is obviously unhygienic and is a health risk to those who come in contact with it.

The reporter believes that both FGW and Network Rail need to address the health risks, and asks:

- could FGW state whether there are any plans to control the risks? For example, could older rolling stock be refurbished with tanks to contain the waste;
- could Network Rail outline the measures that are in place to protect track workers from the risks?

Response from First Great Western

The fitment of toilet retention tanks is an issue that First Great Western (FGW) recognises and would prefer if the majority of rolling stock was equipped not to discharge toilet waste directly on to the track. In light of the current proposals for High Speed Train (HST) replacement, FGW have met with the Department for Transport (DfT) and recommended that if HSTs are planned to have life beyond the current FGW franchise, then retention tanks should be considered for fitment. This is now subject to the DfT rolling stock strategy.

Response from Network Rail

Network Rail would like to thank the reporter for bringing the concerns to our attention. The Head of Maintenance Safety, on 2 February 2009, briefed staff and requested the following;

'Network Rail approached RSSB to undertake research into the effects of current regulations allowing trains to discharge direct to track. In order to provide sufficient background information for such research, it is important that any events associated with effluence are reported, along with the side effects'.

On this basis, staff were asked to report instances of contact with human waste. All of the information above was briefed to delivery units nationally; and shall be re-briefed to western route delivery units, Operations and Customer Services Teams. As part of the *Safety 365 campaign*, a briefing was given to staff in 2008 on Infection Control Guidance, which includes advice of personal hygiene and symptoms of associated illness related to contact with effluence.

Where staff have reported locations of human waste on the track, work has ceased until the location has been 'cleansed'. Further mitigations to manage staff health is made at Penzance where 'blankets' are rolled out at the station, covering the track bed within the fourfoot, where contamination may happen. Bio-sprays are also in use.

In addition, disposable white overalls are supplied to staff, along with a laundry service and additional PPE, whilst PPE is being cleaned. Anti-bacterial handwash is also available to staff in vans. Many mitigations are in place to reduce any risks and efforts continue to find more permanent and reasonable alternative measures.

Network Rail have been working with the Office of Rail Regulation and First Great Western since October 2008, where a trial has been conducted with Interfleet Technology in Derby to prevent toilets being flushed onto the track when a train is stationary or moving at low speed. It would be most useful if all reports of human effluence in work locations are reported to the relevant delivery unit sections, as Network Rail have a waste disposal contract in place to remove and cleanse reported locations.

40894 Creek Road Crossing – public safety concerns

A reporter is concerned about Creek Road Crossing, on the Ely to Peterborough line, posing a risk to the public. It is a wide four-track full barrier crossing, heavily used by pedestrians and vehicles. The reporter has noticed a large gap in the safety fence. It is possible for members of the public to access the railway by passing between the upside barrier when the barriers are lowered.

Another concern is about the lack of audible warning equipment, or yodels, at this crossing, particularly as most crossings have these. Although there are warning lights at the barriers, these are at traffic level height and may be missed by pedestrians. The wide crossing could contribute to the time it takes pedestrians to cross over and the reporter is aware of instances when pedestrians have been shut between the barriers.

The CCTV cameras installed at the crossing are supposed to be used to monitor traffic flow and help identify vehicles that may ignore barrier warning lights:

- could Network Rail use these cameras to monitor the safety problems at this crossing;
- also, could Network Rail review the safety measures at the crossing and possibly repair the fence; and consider installing yodels at the crossing?

Response from Network Rail

Network Rail would like to thank the reporter for raising the concern. The CCTV cameras at this crossing are there to allow the operator a good view of the crossing being clear of any obstructions prior to allowing trains to travel over. Naturally, should incidents of route crime be witnessed, any necessary action can be taken by the operator (yet this is not the sole purpose of the cameras). The provision of yodel alarms is considered on a regular basis through the mandated risk assessments of level crossings, as well as through subsequent inspections. The decisions on provision are made in conjunction with the HMRI.

This crossing was recently risk assessed and has not been categorised at a level to support a business case for it to be changed. The risk of a barrier injuring somebody is very low as the Signaller manually lowers the barriers and will stop lowering them if a pedestrian is within the crossing. Network Rail does monitor the levels of intrusion at level crossings and will continue to do so to make certain any necessary action is taken when trends arise.

The fencing has been damaged on numerous occasions, mostly due to HGV lorries turning into the side road and damaging the fence. Our maintenance teams have approached

Cambridgeshire Highways requesting they install a bollard to prevent ongoing damage to the fence, but to date they have not carried out this work. Network Rail will actively continue to highlight the issue with the council. In the last few weeks some trespass guards have been installed at the crossing and the photograph of these are attached (below). This should reduce the amount of trespass at this crossing.



40911 Kidwelly station fencing and slip, trip and fall concerns

A reporter is concerned about the risk posed to the travelling public at Kidwelly station in South Wales. The reporter believes the station area has remained largely the same for several decades and is in dire need of modernisation work. The reporter's concerns are as follows:

- the access path - which is owned by Network Rail - leads up to the station and is only partially paved with tarmac, whilst the rest is made up of mud and stones. It poses a slip, trip and fall risk;
- the fencing separating the access path from the track is viewed as inadequate, since there is currently a risk of a child getting through to the track side. The fence is a simple construction of stone posts and just three lines of wiring;
- the platform is only partially paved and there are some large gaps between the slabs. Loose chippings are used in other places along the platform where passengers step;
- elderly or partially sighted passengers are thought to be at risk because of a lack of effective platform signage. The end of the platform slopes onto the track, and there are apparently no clear markings to show where the platform limits are.

The reporter suggests that Network Rail and Arriva Trains Wales co-operate to help:

- complete the re-surfacing work on the access path to provide full tarmac coverage;
- modify the fencing arrangements by using a more robust construction;
- modify the platform surfaces to provide even coverage along its full length;
- provide clear platform signage and markings, especially where the platform slopes.

Response from Network Rail

Network Rail would like to thank the reporter for bringing their concerns to our attention. The works identified for early next financial year (2010/11) are as follows:

- Network Rail will lay a tarmac footpath from the station access point at the level crossing to the top of the platform ramp;
- the trackside fencing will be replaced with 1.5 m. high 'Broxap Warrington' type, bow topped fencing;
- the platform coping slabs will be pointed to remove the 'gaps';
- the platform surfaces will be stone dressed & rolled to remove the unevenness. This is the normal treatment for a station of this type;
- white lines painted at the top & bottom of the platform access ramp will allow users to identify the platform and path limits.

Response from Arriva Trains Wales

Arriva Trains Wales would like to thank the reporter for bringing their concerns to our attention. We have met with Network Rail and discussed the issues raised regarding Kidwelly station.

Works identified for completion in 2010 / 2011 are as follows:

- Network Rail will lay a tarmac footpath from the station access point at the level crossing to the top of the platform ramp.
- the trackside fencing will be replaced by Network Rail with 1.5m high 'Broxap Warrington' type, bow topped fencing;
- the platform coping slabs will be pointed to remove the gaps and platform surfaces will be stone dressed and rolled to remove the unevenness. This is the normal treatment for a station of this type. This will be carried out by Network Rail;
- Network Rail will paint white lines at the top and bottom of the platform access ramp which will allow users to identify the platform and path limits;

- Arriva Trains Wales currently have signage in place informing passengers not to go beyond the platform sloping ends. The signage is located at both ends of both platforms;
- Arriva Trains Wales will highlight in yellow the edges of the platform paving slabs to clearly demarcate the changes in platform surfaces.

40919 Non-stopping trains at Hildenborough station

A reporter was concerned that although advertised as stopping at Hildenborough station, the train did not stop or give audible warnings to passengers on the platform. The reporter comments that trains often pass through the station because they are Driver Operated Only (DOO). With no DOO monitors at the station, a guard needs to be on-board the train for dispatch otherwise it will pass through the station. With less trains stopping at Hildenborough the volume of passengers waiting at the station has increased. The reporter has witnessed instances where passengers crowd near the platform edge anticipating boarding a train that does not stop, creating the potential risk of someone falling underneath a train.

The reporter believes the solution to this problem would be to install DOO equipment on the platform so that services that do not have a guard on-board can stop at the station.

For Network Rail:

- could Network Rail comment on the possibility of installing DOO equipment at this station?

For Southeastern:

- could Southeastern ensure that audible warnings are given by trains passing through the station?

Response from Network Rail

Network Rail would like to thank the reporter for bringing their concerns to our attention. The CIRAS report is for Southeastern to answer as both the Train Operator and Station Facility Owner (SFO).

Should Southeastern wish to stop additional train services at Hildenborough then this would be managed via the timetable bidding process, and were these to be DOO services then the necessary arrangements would be put in place for Driver Only Despatch. No such request has been received.

Awaiting Response from Southeastern

40882 Alterations to *RIMINI* packs on site

A track worker is concerned about what appear to be unauthorised alterations made to *RIMINI* packs on site. In one example cited by the reporter, a signed for *RIMINI* pack was altered after work had already begun. Though he was initially informed by the COSS that the site would be a T3 safeguarded zone, it soon transpired that the furthest rail was active. The *RIMINI* pack was promptly altered - under the Engineering Supervisor's instructions - to say it was now a separated zone, consequently providing less protection than a safeguarded zone.

Though staff on site were alert enough to test for live conductor rails at the very beginning of the work, there is an increased risk of electrocution if staff presume it is safe to work when in

fact it is not. The reporter states that only the Project Engineer or RIMINI Planner are authorised to change the *RIMINI pack*. He would like clarification on whether or not:

- anyone else can alter the pack and downgrade the level of protection provided;
- can a *RIMINI pack* be changed once work has begun?

If packs are altered in this manner at the time of the work, what precautions are taken to ensure all those concerned are appropriately briefed?

Additional information:

The location details of this particular incident have been removed because the reporter, who works for a contractor, does not want to blame anyone for what happened. However, he would like some clarification for future reference. The concern was raised at the time with all of the appropriate individuals, but the response given was felt to be lacking.

Response from Network Rail

Network Rail would like to thank the reporter for bringing their concerns to our attention. The reporter asked whether anyone else can alter the *RIMINI (COSS) pack* apart from the Project Engineer and the Planner and then downgrade the level of protection provided. The Network Rail Standard *Safety of People Working On or Near the Line NR/L2/OHS/019* and the *Rule Book Module T7* allows the COSS to change the *Safe System of Work (SSoW)* when the COSS considers it to be inadequate or cannot be implemented as planned based on the circumstances.

Can a RIMINI (COSS) pack be changed once the work has begun?

The answer is yes; this is allowed and can be essential to provide the group working with the necessary protection they require to continue working safely. The COSS as part of their duties is required to review the *SSoW* on a regular basis to check that it continues to be the safest option for the group depending on potential changing conditions (weather, noise, etc) and the type of work they are doing. If the COSS does need to change the *SSoW* they are required to tell the group to stop work and then move them to a position of safety. They must then complete a new *Record of Arrangements and Briefing form RT9909*. The COSS will then brief the group on the new *SSoW*. The COSS needs to confirm that the group understands the new *SSoW* including the new limits of the work area, the type of green zone and this may include what lines are open to traffic or those that may be electrified as in the reporter's example.

If a group member wants the details repeated to them or have any questions about the *SsoW* they need to ask the COSS before the work starts. If a work group member considers the worksite has become unsafe during the work they must tell the COSS immediately. If you are not happy with the safe system of work then please speak up. Thank you for taking the time to raise your concerns.

40949 Hazardous authorised walking route at Crewe station

Members of staff at Crewe station are concerned about the continual flooding of an authorised walking route creating hazardous conditions. The walking route in question is a subway which leads from the staff car park to the station. The reporter comments that the subway floods with sewage contaminated water roughly every two weeks which has attracted vermin to the area. The depth of the water can range from a couple of inches to a foot deep and even when there has been no rainfall the subway still floods. Besides the obvious health risks from the contaminated water, the reporter is also concerned about staff slipping in the wet conditions.

The reporter is aware that water has been pumped out of the subway on a number of occasions but adds that it returns in a couple of days. Are any long term solutions to the problem being considered by Network Rail?

Response from Network Rail

Network Rail would like to thank the reporter for bringing their concerns to our attention. The fault had been reported to Network Rail's property helpdesk. Upon investigation into the flooding of the subway by Network Rail, it was found that the subway sump pumps were not working properly.

Prior to this CIRAS report, Network Rail had raised the issue of maintaining these sump pumps to Virgin Trains. As a precaution and due to the hazardous nature of the waste material and the risk of slips, trips and falls Network Rail have replaced the pumps. The operations and maintenance manuals for the new sump pumps have been issued to Virgin Trains to assist in future maintenance.

40963 Incorrect protection details provided on T2 and T12 forms

A reporter is concerned that during the planning stage of possessions, incorrect signalling information is being provided to staff carrying out T2s or T12s in the Hull area.

When planning track work, staff contact Green Zone Access Co-ordinators (GZACs) to find out relevant information, including which signals should protect their worksite. This information is entered onto forms which are then sent to the Signaller. It is on the day that the possession is to be taken that staff are finding that the signals listed for the T2s or T12s as protecting the worksite are incorrect. Sometimes wrong signal numbers are given, some signals may be missed out or the signals listed are for a different line in a different area.

This is becoming an increasingly common occurrence according to the reporter, and puts staff at risk from a train entering a worksite. The reporter believes that GZAC's use maps in order to provide them with information such as signal numbers and locations and does not understand how these mistakes are being made.

Could Network Rail answer the following:

- what are the reasons for these errors occurring;
- does anyone other than the GZAC check these forms;
- is it possible that out of date references are being used when planning possessions, creating this problem?

Response from Network Rail

Network Rail would like to thank the reporter for bringing their concerns to our attention. Through this report the process of planning was reviewed at Hull. This review did not find any errors produced to substantiate the complaint.

The proposals are checked by the Green Zone Access Co-ordinator (GZAC) and re-checked when printed in the Section Manager's office prior to issue. The source documents used are up to date. The reporter should be assured that despite the fact that no errors were found on the review, further assessment will continue to be undertaken to make certain of a safe and robust system always being delivered.

The safety of our staff is our main concern and having received the report, we will increase our checking regime and would ask the reporter to bring any future instances to their line manager's attention as soon as they occur, so that they can be investigated as necessary.

40965 Staff feeling pressure to use fewer Look-outs

A reporter is concerned about staff feeling pressured to manage with fewer Look-outs than required when carrying out patrolling duties.

If staff are patrolling bi-directional lines then three Look-outs are needed; one behind, one in front and one alongside the Patrolman, ensuring adequate warning of trains approaching from either direction. However, the reporter and colleagues have experienced management questioning staff at the value of having three Look-outs when they think two would suffice

Although staff are not being refused the number of Look-outs required (no one will go out on track without the correct number of Look-outs), it is the attitude being displayed by management that is causing concern. It is felt that there is almost a disregard for staff safety and that they are made to feel as though it would be helpful if they used fewer Look-outs so that other work could be carried out. Please comment.

Response from Network Rail

Network Rail would like to thank the reporter for bringing their concerns to our attention. Network Rail Maintenance has currently more than 13,000 staff that hold the Look-out competence and we do not have a staff or competence shortage.

However, the reporter seems to be mainly concerned that the system of work being used for patrolling and the number of Look-outs needed to deliver that work is being challenged. Our line managers are required by our planning standards to check *Safe Systems of Work (SSoW)* so that they can amend them if they are unsuitable, either by increasing or decreasing the level of protection needed as appropriate. As the reporter freely states they have never been sent out without the correct number of Look-outs. Perhaps in knowing why the SSoW is questioned, will help them to understand the basis for the report.

41001 Staff asked to use tools with expired certificates

A reporter is concerned about the practice of staff being asked to work with equipment, despite having expired certificates. Some members of staff possess certificates that expired some time ago, as they have not received refresher training.

It has been noted by the reporter that this issue has been apparent for a few months on several worksites. The reporter understands that adequate training is required in order for staff to be able to complete work tasks competently, preventing an incident occurring. The reporter would like to know:

- what the procedure is for staff who hold expired certificates and are asked to use tools;
- how soon after a certificate has expired does a contractor have to complete a refresher course?

Response from SkyBlue

SkyBlue thanks CIRAS for forwarding the query regarding individuals being asked to use tools for which they have expired competency tickets. In response to the reporter's questions:

1. *What is the procedure for workers who hold expired tickets and are asked to use tools?*
SkyBlue will only allocate individuals for work if they hold the relevant in-date tickets - our database contains clear and accurate records of competence levels and ticket expiry dates. As an employment business SkyBlue provide temporary workers to our clients to undertake their work assignments - the skills and competence levels that are required for each worker are defined on the client's order. SkyBlue ensure that individuals rostered to the assignments hold the relevant and in-date competency tickets to match the client's requirements.

Once on our client's sites, the SkyBlue workers are under our client's supervision and control. If a SkyBlue worker is requested to use tools or plant for which they do not hold current tickets or do not feel competent, they should refuse to undertake the task.

The SkyBlue '*Worksafe*' procedure is briefed to all workers on induction which confirms that individuals must only perform work for which they are competent and hold the necessary level of certification. It confirms our level of support to ensure that individuals are not be vindicated for raising safety issues. There are several means of communication available in order to gain SkyBlue's support:

- the worker's SkyBlue branch;
- the SkyBlue 24 hour AIRLINE assistance number 0800 1383699;
- John Beard, Head of our Worker Engagement Team ;
- Jeanette Griffiths, Head of Integrated Management Systems.

2. *How soon after a ticket has expired does a contractor have to complete a refresher course?*

Individuals should not use tools or plant if their competency tickets have expired, they must hold an in-date ticket. It should be noted that there are circumstances where SkyBlue would not automatically refresh tickets that have expired. This decision is based on a business need relating to the level of demand for the competency and the number of workers we have currently available holding that level of competency.