

# TOC sector reports and responses

## Periods 13 and 1

Period: 07/03/10 to 01/05/10			
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<b>Checked by</b>	B.Wright	<b>Final Version</b>	1.0

## Contents

40939 Bathgate depot walking route .....	3
40855 Fatigue management for night workers .....	3
40911 Kidwelly station fencing and slip, trip and fall concerns .....	4
40936 Netting 'may get tangled in trains' at Bristol Temple Meads .....	5
40984 Overcrowding during weekend engineering works .....	6
40944 Agency staff not audited before commencing work .....	6
40975 Safety notices not posted up at depots .....	7
40955 Toilet waste on tracks in the south west .....	8
40976 Guard training perceived as inadequate .....	9
41002 Lone dispatch at Rochester station .....	10
40959 Guildford station shutter and essential equipment problem .....	11

### 40939 Bathgate depot walking route

A reporter has contacted CIRAS about the state of the walking route at Bathgate depot. There are many pot holes on the route presenting slip, trip and fall hazards to users. They also appear to be contaminated with oil and the area is very muddy and generally dirty. The recent snow and ice conditions appear to have made the problems worse.

Although some of the route is paved, heavy machinery runs across it and may be adding to the problem. The reporter understands that this pedestrian route will not be used indefinitely as the new line and train station being built will change the layout of the depot. Please comment on the reporter's suggestion that the walking route could be fully paved to make it safe and clean for those requiring access on foot to the depot.

### Response from First ScotRail

Following receipt of this report remedial action was taken to address defects as previously advised you on 2 February 2010. The temporary walking route has since been rebuilt and enhanced overhead lighting has been installed.

The contractor has implemented an increased inspection regime to identify any deficiencies in a timely fashion and take any required actions. The temporary walking route will be removed by the end of this year, when the new Bathgate station will be open and there will be direct access from the station.

### 40855 Fatigue management for night workers

A reporter is concerned that fatigue could cause mistakes to be made by workers dispatching trains. Staff are working extra hours after their regular eight hour night shift is over and the reporter is unsure that c2c are managing fatigue levels when staff work these longer hours.

When working extra hours, shifts can become up to 12 hours long, with the extra hours added onto the end of the shift. This longer shift is often timetabled to occur on consecutive days and this is when the reporter believes staff may experience fatigue - tiredness makes concentrating on dispatching trains more difficult and mistakes could be made because of it. In addition to this, the reporter is aware that staff are entitled to a half-hour break during the eight hour shift, but this isn't always taken due to high workload, adding to the fatigue.

The reporter would like to know how fatigue levels are currently managed? Also, if the practice of extending normal shift hours is going to continue, the reporter would like c2c to consider giving workers a break between shifts. Is this possible?

### Response from c2c

The 2010 rosters for c2c retail department staff are currently being reviewed against a fatigue and risk index calculator, that is widely used throughout the rail industry. The tool was originally developed by QinetiQ as part of research being undertaken by the Health and Safety Executive. We try to avoid extending turns of duty, particularly on nights, but this is not always possible due to exigencies of the train service. The current terms and conditions of employment for c2c retail department staff allow for turns of duty to be extended for this reason. We are, however, looking to include a suitable break in the turns of duty for train dispatch staff where those turns are extended, and this is being considered as part of the wider review of rosters now being carried out.

### 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;

## TOC sector

- 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.

### 40936 Netting 'may get tangled in trains' at Bristol Temple Meads

The pigeon netting at Bristol Temple Meads is the cause of some concern for one reporter. First Great Western and CrossCountry both operate services from this busy station. As shown in the photograph, some of the netting is now dangling down within a few feet of trains passing underneath. If it drops any further, the reporter fears it may become snagged in a train and then exert a 'pull' on the station canopy it is attached to. This could potentially bring down some of the canopy, which is over 100 years old and quite fragile.

The reporter believes a repair would be expensive to carry out, but suggests the decision to leave the netting in its current state needs to be re-evaluated. Apart from being a potential safety risk, it may suggest to passengers the station is not sufficiently maintained. Could a risk assessment be undertaken to determine what sort of risk the netting poses?



### Response from First Great Western

First Great Western (FGW) would like to thank the reporter for bringing their concerns to our attention. FGW agrees with the views of the reporter and consequently has had the netting removed.

### 40984 Overcrowding during weekend engineering works

A reporter is concerned about overcrowding on East Coast services during weekend engineering works. The reporter comments that there is a ten week engineering programme currently taking place affecting services in and out of London. Trains are being reduced from the normal two or three services an hour down to one. This is resulting in trains being so full that staff are unable to walk through the unit, which could lead to difficulty attending to passengers or accessing equipment should there be an emergency.

Although it is understood that East Coast are not responsible for these works the reporter believes the selling of advance purchase tickets is creating the overcrowding. The reporter would like to see fewer or no advance purchase tickets sold during planned engineering works in order to ease overcrowding on the restricted services. The reporter asks:

- do East Coast trains have a maximum capacity;
- also, could East Coast comment on the overcrowding and the suggestion made by the reporter?

### Response from East Coast Main Line

East Coast Main Line would like to thank the reporter for raising these concerns. The engineering work which is taking place in the Hitchin area involves essential maintenance of track and point work, as well as overhead line equipment and has been planned for some considerable time. As the reporter has indicated, this has resulted in a reduction in weekend services from the normal three to four services per hour in either direction to two per hour in either direction.

With regard to advance purchase tickets, due to industry fares regulations we are obliged to offer 'off peak' weekend tickets which cannot be capacity controlled – however we rigorously monitor sales of advanced bookings and limit, where necessary, the availability of other fares which might be made available to passengers.

As a result of experience gained during the first two weekends of the engineering works, we took the decision to reduce reserved capacity in standard class by around 100 seats (about 25%) thereby allowing additional capacity for 'walk-up' passengers; and have actively reduced the number of advance purchase fares available on dates affected by the Hitchin engineering works. We have also used our ticket selling website to advertise the fact that engineering works are taking place and to advise passengers that reservations should be made on the weekends in question. We are continuing to monitor the effectiveness of these actions.

Regarding capacity, each East Coast service has a maximum seating capacity of approximately 530 seats, however there are no limitations on the numbers of passengers who are allowed on board: our train guards are responsible for the safety of the train and are briefed not to take the train forward if they feel it is overcrowded and unsafe to do so.

### 40944 Agency staff not audited before commencing work

A reporter has raised concerns about agency staff working for London Overground (LOROL) without correct Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) or certification needed to work at stations and not undergoing Drugs and Alcohol (D&A) tests before work commences.

When working for LOROL, the reporter understands that LOROL PPE should be worn. However, it has been witnessed that this is not always occurring. Also, prior to commencing

work, the reporter believes that LOROL are supposed to check the competencies safety critical staff hold and should be D&A tested. The reporter understands this is also not occurring before work commences and may only be happening after staff have started their roles.

Could an audit of agency staff be undertaken to ensure staff employed through agencies are provided with the correct PPE, carry the valid safety and competency cards, and are tested for D&A prior to commencing work with LOROL?

### **Response from London Overground (LOROL)**

The reporter is correct that any staff working for LOROL in a safety critical role should be D&A tested, hold the appropriate competencies, certification and licences, and use any PPE commensurate to the role that is being undertaken.

Agency staff are employed by LOROL to cover ticket office duties, platform assistance duties, gateline supervision and late night security presence. However, no agency staff working for LOROL at our stations undertake safety critical work. Whilst we agree that it is best practice for all agency staff to be D&A tested prior to working at LOROL, testing is only mandated for safety critical duties. The only task that requires the use of PPE is the spreading of de-icing agent as part of winter weather precautions duties for which all staff are trained and PPE provided.

### **40975 Safety notices not posted up at depots**

A reporter is concerned that drivers and guards are either not receiving safety notices or that they arrive too late at Horsham and other depots. Safety notices provide information about changes to regular train operations, such as line speed restrictions and different train door openings. Every depot is supposed to be notified from control in London so that safety critical staff are aware of these changes when they sign on for duty. Although Production Managers are responsible for sharing information and ensuring notices are posted, there is no Production Manager at Horsham. As a result leading drivers are responsible for ensuring the notices are displayed but there isn't always a leading driver on duty. This is not checked when notices are faxed over, leading to a backlog of paperwork.

The reporter believes that the leading driver roster system hasn't been working because there aren't enough drivers on the rota and when someone is on leave there is no one to cover their duty. Staff have brought information from notice cases at London stations to the depots and posted them up on their own initiative. Although the information is posted, this is not an efficient or timely process. The reporter is concerned that an incident of the line could occur if notices aren't posted in good time and trackside information is missed. Whilst the problem at Horsham is particularly bad, it is also an issue at other depots.

A suggestion is for an electronic notice board to be used where all notices are sent out centrally from a main control room, in much the same way as passenger information systems work. This would mean that notices wouldn't go missing and would be at all depots at the same time. A further suggestion is that daily notice sheets are issued with driver's schedule cards as is used by First Great Western.

Could Southern comment on the situation and whether the suggestions could be taken into consideration to improve the distribution of safety notice information?

### Response from Southern

Thank you for bringing this concern to our attention, the reporter is correct that late notices and safety information should be displayed as expediently as possible. We can confirm that we are considering an electronic notice case system and are currently looking at various options available from different suppliers in order to select the most suitable equipment going forward. However if agreed, this will still take some time before implementation, so in the meantime based on your feedback, we will review the arrangements that are in place at our unsupervised depots to ensure they are suitable and timely.

### 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.

### 40976 Guard training perceived as inadequate

A reporter has contacted CIRAS with concerns about the lack of comprehensive training given to office staff covering guard duties. Due to a recent shortage of guard staff, other staff members who do not normally work on trains, were provided one day's training before covering the role.

Staff covering guard duties have not received full guard training and many have not had any on-train experience. The reporter is concerned that staff may make operational mistakes, for example with door openings, which could endanger passenger safety. If office staff are required to cover guard duties, the reporter would like to see more training provided. Is this possible?

Also, could Northern Rail clarify what is being covered in the short one day course and if it adequately equips staff to fulfil their duties as a guard?

### Response from Northern

Northern is committed to ensuring that any staff working on trains hold full competency to undertake the safety and operational duties associated with their role. Northern suffered an unprecedented number of Conductors who declined to work on Sunday 27 December 2009, and in order to run even a basic service we decided to deploy competent managers to work some trains.

The majority of managers deployed were Conductor Team Managers who are competent in Conductor duties and are competent on the routes they covered. The only people who received any training were Driver Team Managers, who received conversion training to enable them to act as Conductors.

To facilitate this training a gap analysis exercise was undertaken by looking at the competence performance criteria for both Conductors and Drivers to generate a training

needs analysis. This analysis then created a training session in conjunction with the Operations Standards Team to ensure all relevant criteria was covered.

The training undertaken included both theory and practical assessment. The 'office staff' referred to were probably two other managers who already held the necessary Conductor competencies but refreshed routes in accordance with the applicable standard. The same methodology and criteria was applied to cover a number of Conductor shortages on 4 April 2010.

### 41002 Lone dispatch at Rochester station

Lone dispatch of trains at Rochester station is a concern for one reporter. The recent removal of platform staff from the station means that Conductors have to dispatch trains alone. Normally this would not be a problem. However, the platforms at Rochester station have a large curve, meaning that neither the whole train nor the signal can be seen at the same time. This makes it difficult for Conductors to dispatch the 10 or 12 car units that stop at the station.

The reporter suggests that the platform staff are re-instated at the station to aid with dispatch or that indicators are installed to inform Conductors of the signal aspect. Could Southeastern comment on:

- whether the practice of lone dispatch at Rochester has been risk assessed;
- plus comment on the two suggestions raised by the reporter?

### Response from Southeastern

Southeastern would like to thank the reporter for raising these concerns as it gives us an opportunity to explain the process that has to be completed before any changes in dispatch methods can take place. The changes to dispatch arrangements at Rochester became effective from 7 March 2010 following a full risk assessment and completion of a recommendation made during this risk assessment, namely relocation of the stop car mark on platform three.

These changes were fully consulted with company council, and at the request of company council a further visit to the site was made by a team which included Conductors and a Health and Safety Representative. Furthermore, it was agreed during the consultation process that a full review of the new arrangements would be carried out within three months.

To address the issues specifically raised by the reporter:

- whether the practice of lone dispatch at Rochester has been risk assessed; and
- the two suggestions raised by the reporter?

The dispatch arrangements for Rochester have been risk assessed and a banner repeater is in fact provided on platform two. Conductors can, by using the width of the platform, view both the whole length of the train and the starting signal on platform three. Operation Inspectors are currently monitoring the workings of train dispatch and no issues have been identified or reported. There are no plans to change the dispatch arrangements; however, a full review of the dispatch arrangements at Rochester will take place during May. The team will again consist of Operation Inspectors, local Managers, Conductors and a Health and Safety Representative.

### 40959 Guildford station shutter and essential equipment problem

A reporter has contacted CIRAS regarding a broken shutter and the lack of essential equipment at Guildford station.

#### Shutter

Due to a broken handle, the roll-down shutter at one of the exits is difficult to close. To pull the shutter down two or three members of staff are needed. The reporter is concerned that in the event of a night time emergency station evacuation, there will not be enough staff to help with locking down the back exit. This is because there are only two members of station staff and one security guard present at that time. Although attempts have been made to fix the problem, the reporter feels this has not been adequate. The reporter suggests a permanent solution would be to replace the shutter completely so that it can be operated single-handedly.

#### Essential equipment

The reporter is concerned that some platforms do not have equipment immediately available such as fire extinguishers, flags, dispatch packs and torches. In the event of a fire, for example, equipment would need to be sought from another platform. The reporter fears this would delay the response time as it would involve obtaining and carrying a fire extinguisher from another platform across a bridge or via a subway. Could South West Trains ensure every platform has direct access to essential equipment?

### Response from South West Trains

South West Trains would like to thank the reporter for raising their concerns regarding Guildford stations broken shutter handle and the lack of essential equipment.

The shutter reported is part of the public right of way and is not normally closed other than at Christmas (when the shutter normally receives a pre-use service), and therefore used infrequently. On examination the shutter handle was found to be faulty and a replacement is being provided.

An equipment box or bin will be provided on platforms that do not have staff accommodation, to contain essential items of equipment for staff access and use. The station equipment is subject to regular planned general inspections that check the integrity of the equipment provided and ensures any remedial action is taken. The reporter is reminded to ensure that equipment faults are reported, when found, to the local management team.

The provision of fire equipment is based upon the fire risk assessments undertaken by the South West Trains Fire Officer, who determines the equipment required and its placement in liaison with the local management. The Fire Officer has confirmed that the appropriate equipment is provided and maintained correctly.