

Date: Friday 11 September 2009

Time: 15:00

Subject: New CIRAS freephone number

Contact: Clare Alder, Communications Manager - 020 3142 5361 or
clare.alder@ciras.org.uk

CIRAS launches its new freephone number – 0800 4 101 101

CIRAS yesterday launched a new freephone number for its confidential safety reporting service for rail industry staff. The new number is **0800 4 101 101**.

The new number was prompted by findings from research conducted by Ipsos MORI on behalf of CIRAS, and based on feedback from a number of key industry figures including Iain Coucher, Chief Executive of Network Rail, which highlighted the need for a more memorable freephone number.

The new number will feature on new Network Rail Sentinel cards, ensuring that all Network Rail staff and contractors have access to the CIRAS number. CIRAS hopes that other companies will follow suit and include the number on any safety literature they produce.

CIRAS offers a service that facilitates dialogue between rail staff and the companies in order to obtain positive resolutions, whilst still maintaining the confidentiality of those who report their concerns. Maurice Wilsdon, Head of CIRAS, explains: "The service that we offer at CIRAS acts in a positive way for both the rail worker and the company. By identifying safety concerns that may not have previously been raised, CIRAS offers a valuable source of information across all sectors of the industry". Statistics demonstrate this value - last year, 40 per cent of safety concerns reported to CIRAS resulted in additional safety measures being put in place. The three most common issues that are raised through CIRAS are: rules and procedures; equipment; and knowledge, skills and experience.

CIRAS receives around 600 contacts each year. However, there may be more rail staff with safety concerns that haven't yet come to light.

Maurice continues: "CIRAS hopes that, with the new number, we will receive many more contacts, enabling us to work with rail companies to help the industry to become even safer".

The new number was launched at a small event hosted at the CIRAS office in London, with the CIRAS Committee and key industry names attending including Iain Coucher, Adrian Shooter (Chairman, Chiltern Railways), Paul Thomas (Chairman, RSSB) and Michael Roberts (ATOC). At the event, Iain Coucher said: "I would like to think that everyone in the rail industry was comfortable telling their line manager about a safety concern. The reality is that this is not always the case. For whatever reason, there are occasions when people do not feel comfortable or able. The industry needs a confidential reporting system, and CIRAS is doing a great job and I will continue to give it my full support."

The previous freephone number will continue to run in parallel with this new number for at least 12 months.

For further information please contact Clare Alder, Communications Manager by emailing clare.alder@ciras.org.uk or by telephoning 020 3142 5361.

Ends

Notes to Editor

1. CIRAS is the confidential incident reporting and analysis system for the rail industry and is available to anyone with a safety concern who works within GB mainline rail companies.
2. CIRAS complements existing rail company reporting channels, it does not replace them.
3. The system is completely confidential, entirely impartial and is committed to helping the rail industry to be even safer. Since its inception CIRAS has never compromised on confidentiality.

4. CIRAS can accept reports about: working conditions; rule breaking; dangerous behaviour; and pressure from management to work unsafely. It is unable to accept reports about: personal grievances; industrial relations; urgent real-time issues; or personnel issues.

5. CIRAS was established in 1996 as part of a research programme at the University of Strathclyde. It became a national network in April 2000.

6. To contact CIRAS from anywhere in the country, rail staff can call **0800 4 101 101**, text **07507 285887** or write to **freepost CIRAS**.

7. Further information is available at www.ciras.org.uk.