

Date: 18 February 2010

Time: 12:00

Subject: CIRAS freephone number on new Sentinel cards

Contact: Clare Alder, Communications Manager - 020 3142 5361 or
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CIRAS freephone number appears on new Sentinel cards

Sentinel card holders will find it even easier to contact CIRAS as the CIRAS freephone number will now appear on the new design of the cards. The new cards went into distribution at the end of January 2010.

Over 100,000 of people working on the railway will have access to the CIRAS number at all times.

CIRAS offers a service that facilitates dialogue between rail staff and the companies in order to obtain resolutions, whilst still maintaining the confidentiality of those who report their concerns. This very supportive message about CIRAS, coupled with Network Rail's commitment to include the CIRAS number on all new Sentinel cards, is a very positive statement to the industry and its workforce, and demonstrates the importance of an independent confidential reporting system within the railway industry. This will mean that literally thousands of people working in the railway industry will have access to the CIRAS number at all times.

Statistics demonstrate the value of CIRAS - 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 relate to: rules and procedures; equipment; and knowledge, skills and experience.

At the launch of the freephone number in September 2009 Iain Coucher, Chief Executive of Network Rail, 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". CIRAS is thrilled with Network Rail's demonstration to commitment by including the number in the cards.

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

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 and London Underground.
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 on a wide range of safety issues including 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.