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CIRAS IS A COMPLETELY INDEPENDENT SYSTEM THAT PROVIDES A WAY FOR RAIL INDUSTRY STAFF TO REPORT SAFETY CONCERNS IN CONFIDENCE.

CIRAS COMPLEMENTS EXISTING RAIL COMPANY REPORTING SYSTEMS; IT DOES NOT REPLACE THEM.

## Communication at the heart of the rail industry

The importance of communication is a universal theme. A clear and effective message can create opportunities and relationships, solve existing issues and avoid the creation of new problems.

On page 6 of this newsletter we feature two reports, one which involves the clarity of passenger announcements and another which is a report on the failure of a train radio system. The workers' employers have provided us with full responses which set out how they investigated the incidents, an outline of their current and updated procedures to deal with such issues and how these procedures are assessed to measure their effectiveness.

These are two very obvious examples of how important clear communication is to the rail industry. However, we have found at CIRAS that several of the reports we receive have at heart an issue regarding communication even though it may not seem to be the issue on the surface. Everyone connected to the rail industry is involved in communicating in some form or other, whether it is with colleagues, managers, employees, work partners, passengers or perhaps even CIRAS.

For CIRAS, communicating well across all sectors of the rail industry is vital. We need you to know that we are here, as a confidential reporting system, so that you can highlight your safety concerns in order to help maintain and improve an already impressive safety record across the rail industry.

In the coming months, we will be asking you to help us evaluate the way in which we are communicating with you, improve on what we are currently doing and also look at new ways to communicate with the industry at all levels.

However, if you cannot wait for us to come to you, you can always contact us at CIRAS with any feedback and ideas on the Reporter, our website or anything else which you feel would help you to make the best of the services CIRAS offers.

Please send your comments to Alex Kapila (Communications Manager), at: CIRAS, 179 Shrophire House, Tottenham Court Road, London, W1T 7NZ or you can email at [alex.kapila@ciras.org.uk](mailto:alex.kapila@ciras.org.uk) or call on 0207 580 0236.

We look forward to hearing from you.

### With Regret...

We have to say goodbye to Mike Rejman. After leading the team for two years, Mike stepped down as Director of CIRAS at the end of May. Everyone here would like to thank him for his passionate commitment to CIRAS and wish him well for the future.

Until a permanent successor is appointed, the CIRAS team will be supported by Maurice Wilsdon, Head of National Programmes, Railway Operations at Rail Safety and Standards Board and Collin Carr who was previously the Infrastructure Liaison Group representative on the CIRAS Executive.

Meet the members of the CIRAS team old and new, in the next edition of the Reporter.

Anyone who works on the rail network is able to use CIRAS. If you would like to receive the newsletter directly via email or post or simply to learn more about the service please feel free to contact us by phone, post or text as detailed below.

Concerns about safety should be raised with your line manager or employer company. If however, you feel that these channels are not appropriate or adequate, then contact CIRAS.

## REPORT

## Overcrowding at Royston station during weekend engineering works

A reporter has contacted CIRAS concerned that Royston station cannot cope with the high volume of passengers that pass through on weekends, when planned engineering work takes place on the London Kings Cross to Cambridge service.

Due to engineering work taking place, passengers travelling from Kings Cross to Cambridge are terminating at Royston where a replacement bus service is then provided, or if travelling in the other direction, they are getting a bus to Royston where they then board the service.

The reporter's concern is that the station platforms are too narrow to cope with the volume of passengers when they try to alight or board at the station. The reporter fears that there is a real concern that someone could be crushed on the platforms and believes a serious incident will occur. S/he states that on platform 2 there is a very narrow entrance/exit where 600/700 passengers have to filter through which causes severe overcrowding on the platform.

A contributory factor that makes the problem worse is that there are not enough staff rostered to work on Saturdays to control the crowds. The reporter believes that there should be at least 6/7 staff rostered on the Saturday shift to cover the increase in passenger numbers but at present there are too few staff rostered to run the station in a safe manner.

The reporter would like to see a risk assessment carried out to ascertain if it is safe for a small station such as Royston to be handling the volume of passengers which currently pass through at weekends and to determine how many staff should be rostered to deal with the influx of passengers. The reporter suggests that Hitchin would be a more sensible and safe station to use at weekends as it is bigger and has the capacity to deal with the larger volumes of passengers. Can First Capital Connect comment on the feasibility of this suggestion?

## RESPONSE FROM FIRST CAPITAL CONNECT

We have given this matter some thought as crowd control issues are important and we are in the process of reviewing our local emergency plans. There was a problem with provision of insufficient buses one weekend in the autumn – the figure of 600/700 people mentioned by the reporter suggests this particular instance as this is more persons than would ordinarily fit on one train.

Appropriate action has been taken to avoid a repetition of the issue that day with the bus provision. The train planning and crowd control arrangements for Royston are being reviewed in readiness for the next programmed use of Royston for bus/train transfer (Easter weekend). This includes consideration of staffing levels.

We appreciate the reporter's concern as in addition to crowding there are other risk issues to consider such as workforce assault.

With regard to the use of Hitchin as an alternative to Royston, we do have reservations as not only does it considerably increase the length of the bus journey, it means that double-decker buses cannot be used due to a low bridge. This notwithstanding, if we consider a station to be unsuitable for the termination of trains we will use a better alternative or improve the arrangements at the location if we can.



## REPORT

## Fence too close to platform edge at St Erth station

A reporter is concerned about a permanent fence which is believed to have been recently erected against the rules on platform 4 at St. Erth station in Cornwall. The main problem with the fence is that it comes within a few inches of the platform edge, when according to the rules it should be at least four feet away.

The reporter would like to know why the fence has been erected so close to the platform edge in apparent breach of the rules. The fear is that someone could be killed if they were looking out from a train when passing by the fence.

- Please could it be confirmed if this is a breach of the rules as perceived by the reporter?

- If that is the case, can the fence be moved back from the platform edge in line with the rules?

## RESPONSE FROM FIRST GREAT WESTERN

First Great Western (FGW) would like to thank the reporter for raising this concern.

FGW has established that the fence was recently erected on platform 4 at St Erth station in order to prevent children walking off the platform end or potentially falling off the back of the platform. This platform is not used for passenger rail services, however, it is used on occasion for stabling Engineering trains. There is a small cafe on the platform and some picnic benches for customers' use.

The panel of fencing immediately adjacent to the track has now been removed and arrangements made for the removal of the remaining fence panels.

FGW are working with Network Rail to ensure an acceptable solution to this matter.

FGW would like to remind all staff that concerns of this nature could be remedied more promptly if raised through internal reporting channels.



## REPORT

## Near miss incident at Stratford station during OLE work

Several reporters have contacted CIRAS concerned about a near miss incident which occurred during Overhead Line Electrification (OLE) work at Stratford station on 25th August 2007. The reporters are concerned that staff working on OLE equipment were not properly protected during the possession and isolation, which could have resulted in an electric shock.

Two near miss incidents involving OLE staff occurred according to the reporters, due to the earth supply to the OLE equipment not protecting them. The first near miss incident occurred when there were sightings of blue flashes coming from the OLE equipment about an hour after work commenced. These flashes were noticed by the operatives when carrying out work and as a result work was immediately stopped due to the imminent dangers and risk to life.

Following this incident the situation was assessed and shortly afterwards staff were informed it was safe to resume work again. However whilst staff were in the process of raising equipment, the reporters observed more flashes from the OLE and a loud bang was heard. After this second incident OLE work was stopped for the night. The reporters believe that these two near miss incidents could have resulted in multiple fatalities.

The reporters would like to see this near miss thoroughly investigated and would particularly like to know why work was allowed to continue again after the first incident had occurred? The reporters believe that after the first incident, work should not have carried on due to the severity of the risks to workers personal safety. The reporters feel that thus far these near miss incidents were not taken as seriously as they should have been.

Furthermore the reporters stated that work will continue at this location over the coming months. Can Network Rail and Jarvis Fastline provide reassurance that steps have been put in place to prevent such a potentially fatal incident occurring again?



## RESPONSE FROM NETWORK RAIL

Network Rail thanks the reporter for advising CIRAS of their concerns. We can confirm that the issues raised within this report are known and a formal investigation has been undertaken and completed. It concluded that the incident occurred because the relevant electrical sections were not fully protected in accordance with laid down procedures. Staff working on the ground were fully protected by earth leads which had been applied to protect the site. A suite of 11 actions have been proposed to fully address the causes identified in the report and these will be managed through the Network Rail recommendations process. A copy of the Formal Investigation Report will be sent to those organisations involved.



## REPORT

## First Aid Competency at Colchester

The lack of fully qualified first aiders at Colchester depot operated by Network Rail is a concern for one reporter. Since March this year, all certification for fully qualified first aiders trained for the St. Johns certificate has lapsed. Despite some discussion about staff gaining access to the St John training courses, nothing has happened for many months. Consequently, work is being re-arranged so as to circumvent the requirement to have a fully qualified first aider in attendance for every five people. Work is being carried out in groups of four with separate COSS (Controller of On Site Safety) briefings and RIMINI paperwork. However, for certain tasks, several smaller groups may be physically working in the same space, effectively making up one larger group where there are far in excess of five present.

The reporter points out that the work on overhead lines carried out by the depot has not changed and still poses the same risks it did when fully qualified staff were in attendance. The fact that work groups have been reduced in size does not reduce the amount of danger staff are exposed to. If there were an emergency, a qualified and certificated member of staff would not be available to provide immediate assistance. It is acknowledged that staff, despite not having the St John certificate, hold a basic first aid qualification for an attendance only course.

The reporter suggests meeting this standard is a problem for other depots in the Anglia region. However, some depots, such as Romford, have been able to meet the standard with more than 16 qualified first aiders. Can the standard also be applied at Colchester so each gang has at least one fully qualified first aider?



## RESPONSE FROM NETWORK RAIL

There was a shortage of qualified first aiders at Colchester, if staff were sent out in groups of five or more when this issue was originally reported back in November 2007. This issue is now in the process of being resolved, by the training of 12 members of staff in period January 2008 with a further 24 members of staff to be trained during February and March 2008 making a total of 36 staff being trained in first aid which will bring the levels up to the SMP requirement.

## CIRAS COMMENT:

CIRAS has received two separate reports on a slip trip fall risk at the access steps to Wallers Ash Tunnel. One of the reports and the response from Network Rail is printed below.

## REPORT

**Slip, trip, fall risk at access steps to Wallers Ash Tunnel**

A reporter has contacted CIRAS concerned about a set of access steps which s/he believes are of very poor quality and pose a danger to users. The steps go down the side of a steep cutting and are located at the London end of Wallers Ash tunnel, 62 mile 22 chain.

The reporter states that there are several issues making the steps hazardous to users. Firstly the reporter believes that they are too steep and go straight up the cutting as opposed to in a zigzag fashion, which would be far safer. Secondly the tread is too narrow. According to the reporter the average user would only be able to get half their boot on a tread. Finally the reporter states that there is no proper infill as the stone is coming out of the steps.

The reporter believes that an accident is imminent due to the poor quality and design of these steps as someone could easily fall right down the cutting. This danger is made worse at night time as the area is very poorly lit, making slip/trip and fall hazards more likely.

The reporter believes that the steps are not fit for use and would like to see Network Rail shut off access to these steps and have them rectified to a standard that does not pose a danger to the safety of those who use them.

## RESPONSE FROM NETWORK RAIL

These steps were created a couple of years ago, it was discovered soon after they were completed that the design did not conform to any recognised standard either industry or external. I should add that the design was not authorised by the Track Maintenance Engineer. Consequently they have been closed for use with appropriate notification attached to the access gate.

On a couple of occasions it has been discovered that the notice attached to the gate stating the access steps were not fit for purpose and should not be used, has been removed. The notice was then replaced.

On receipt of this additional information we have removed the access gate in favour of new fencing, thus ensuring these steps cannot be used in future.

## REPORT

**Slip, trip, fall risk due to a lack of lighting at Weeton station**

Despite frequent reports by many individuals, there is still no lighting on the Up platform at Weeton Station, according to one reporter to CIRAS. The reporter suggests that the lighting has not been repaired because of the station's rural location which makes arranging contractor access difficult.

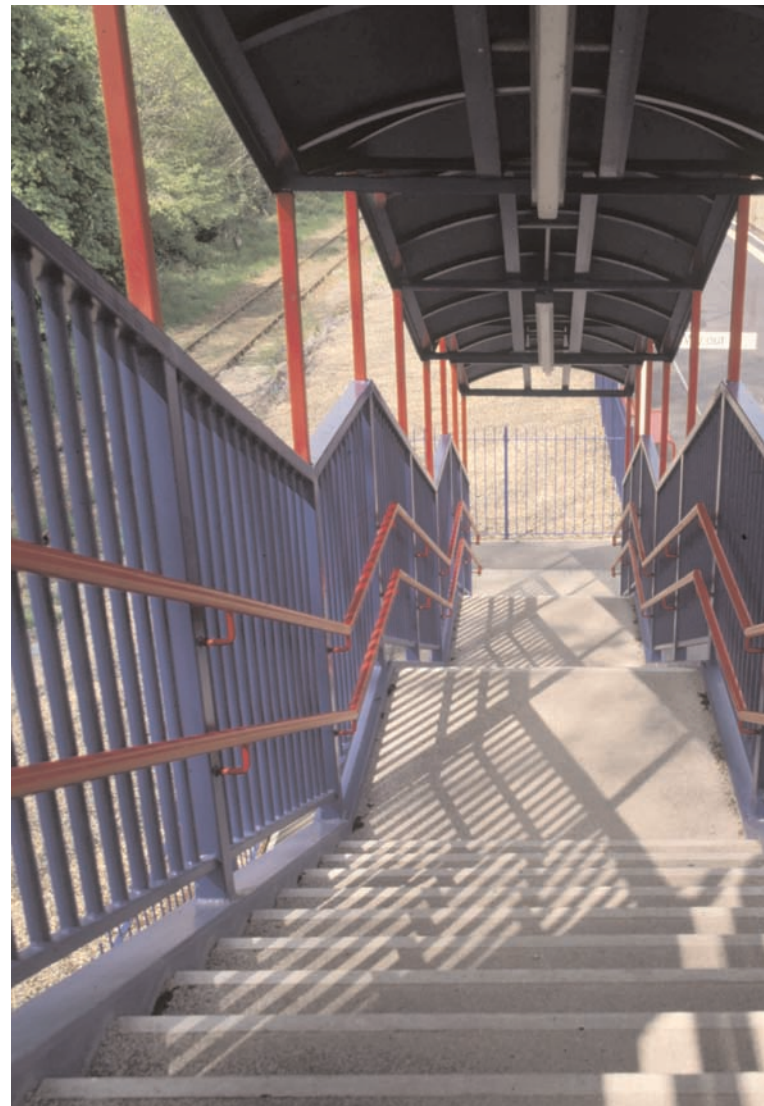
Whatever the reasons for the unlit platform, it is now an even greater hazard in the current wintry conditions. Passengers, station staff and train crew are all at risk of slipping or tripping. The reporter asks whether something will finally be done about the lighting now.

## RESPONSE FROM NETWORK RAIL

The fault on the lights at Weeton was first reported to Network Rail Property Action Line on 10 Dec 2007, and operatives attended site on 15 Dec 2007, carrying out a temporary measure to switch the lights on permanently over the Christmas period. At the same time we surveyed the site lighting and identified some areas for improvement.

Permanent repairs to the cabling and lighting circuits were carried out on 9 Jan 2008, and upgrade work to the light units on 19 Jan 2008.

This work involved the provision of an additional lighting column to illuminate the car park and ramp and the renewal of five single head fittings with double head fittings.



## WHAT IS RIMINI?

Rimini (short for risk minimisation) is the industry standard which states that all jobs carried out on or near the line must be planned using a safe system of work. The standard sets out risk and the minimisation arrangements for the protection of staff.



## REPORT

## Official RIMINI paperwork not being used by a subcontractor

A reporter is concerned that RIMINI does not appear to form any part of the planning process at Amco. Instead of the official RIMINI process being used, alternative paperwork is used which the reporter suggests is inappropriate. For example, where RIMINI paperwork would normally be expected, a COSS (Controller of Site Safety) form is used as a substitute. This COSS form would typically be filled out on a computer by someone not qualified as a COSS, the reporter says. There is no RIMINI planner at the company at all.

The reporter would like to know why Amco are an exception when most reputable companies adhere to the RIMINI process. This is a common concern amongst staff at Amco. Staff have been told by managers that they don't use RIMINI at Amco.

Though Amco have been audited in the past by Network Rail, it is suggested that this is actually a superficial 'check box' exercise – are any checks in place to see if the personnel producing the paperwork are actually qualified to do so? Why is the fact there isn't any RIMINI paperwork picked up on?

The reporter is also concerned about another perceived short-cut at Amco. Before a possession takes place, a site visit by the COSS would normally be expected. This is so the COSS can familiarise himself with the work to be carried out and all the local arrangements. Without these visits, which naturally require someone to travel to the site before work begins, the reporter believes COSSs are turning up 'blind' and that this poses a real risk to safety. If the paperwork is poor to begin with and no site visit has taken place, the reporter is worried that a catastrophic error could be made, for example, working on a road outside the possession.

- Could Network Rail please clarify when RIMINI paperwork should be used by subcontractors?
- Could Amco explain why the RIMINI process is not being adhered to?

## RESPONSE FROM NETWORK RAIL

The Safety of People Working On or Near the Line is a Network Rail Standard and the necessary controls are mandated within NR/SP/OHS/019. This requires effective planning of on track activities and establishes a hierarchy of protection and warning methods. It is important to note that those undertaking the planning may not necessarily be known as RIMINI Planners but are required to be deemed competent in core planner skills. The work will normally be planned as an integral part of the planning process and provided to the COSS or IWA prior to the start of work, there are instances however when the COSS or IWA can plan the work and decide on the safe system of work to be used. A form is provided in the guidance to help assist in the selection of safe systems of work, however the use of this form is not mandatory as long as employers can demonstrate the justification for selecting the level in the hierarchy planned.

The 'COSS Pack' which is provided to the COSS or IWA should contain part-completed documentation indicating the safe system of work and should include the RT9909 or RT9937 (COSS or IWA form), supported where applicable, by form RT3181 (for T2 or T12) and, where appropriate, a site diagram. Information, such as the factors considered in arriving at the planned arrangements, risk assessments, method statements etc, do not form part of the COSS pack. Staff should be made aware of the relevant contents of such information by the person in charge (who may not be the COSS) as part of a safety briefing regime but not normally issued to the COSS.

Network Rail has visited AMCO sites and undertaken the relevant checks and there was no evidence of any problems with the RIMINI process,

AMCO comments as follows: -

AMCO state that all Site Managers are certified with core planner cards as required by the Standard and maintained on their compliance database. They too are satisfied that they are following the RIMINI process and ensure that all the packs provided include the relevant information suitable to the safe system of work which has been planned.

With regards to the perceived short cut of not allowing the COSS to visit the site to familiarise himself with the area, AMCO stated that under no circumstances do AMCO allow short cuts to be made. A COSS is generally allocated their own area of work and as such are familiar with the locality. The projects they are involved with are generally low risk, off track (Not On Or Near The Line), carrying out minor repairs, fencing and minor brickwork repairs. When work is deemed high risk and potentially complex, the COSS is allowed to visit the site prior to the work taking place, to familiarise themselves with the location.



## REPORT

## Incident that involved violation of an operational standard on the Jubilee Line

A reporter has contacted CIRAS concerned about an incident where the train radio system failed for approximately an hour in the morning in the Canary Wharf area on 24th October 2007. The concern for the reporter is that during this time, there was a short period when trains were run through the area carrying passengers despite the failure of the radio system.

The reporter believes this was a clear breach of standard 48, version 2 which states that if it is not possible for drivers to either transmit or receive messages then trains must be withdrawn from service and worked empty through the area. The reporter is aware that after approximately 45 minutes, staff were instructed to run trains carrying passengers with double manning despite the fact that the radio system was still not working. The reporter states that operational standard 48 version 2 was enforced as a direct effect of the 7/7 bombings, and this particular occasion was a breach of this standard.

The reporter is concerned that safety critical decisions are sometimes being overridden by political decisions, as this is an example of such an occasion. The reporter would like to see that the work undertaken by operational staff is not interfered with forcing them to breach the rules.



## RESPONSE FROM JUBILEE LINE OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

As with any radio system failure on the line, the Neasden Control Centre firstly establish if it's a train borne failure, or a track related failure. Once this was confirmed train services were suspended in the affected area, North Greenwich through to Canary Wharf in accordance with operational procedures. On restoration of the radios system, the first passenger service trains to run through the affected areas were double staffed as an added precaution.

The investigation found no evidence of safety critical decisions being overridden. The Jubilee Line Service Control Centre communications tapes were reviewed for the Morning in question. This confirmed that no trains ran through the affected area without radio.

Additional Response (from the Connect Project Team)

Decisions relating to the suspension of the train service are always taken by Operations. Following a train radio failure, we do all we can to ensure that service is restored in the shortest possible time to minimise the impact on Operations.

The fault was reported to Thales' Network Management Centre (NMC) on 24 October 2007 at 05.45 hrs as "No Tx/Rx Neasden Service Control Centre to Canary Wharf both roads".

Thales had Engineers on standby in the Service Control Centre (SCC) at Neasden and was therefore able to respond immediately. After a series of tests the fault was found to be due to a voting card at Druid Street shaft un-seating. The card was re-seated and service restored.

There was a further non service affecting fault at Baker Street at the same time within the platform area only. This was progressed after the service affecting fault at Druid Street was cleared. This was cleared initially by replacing the receiver. However, a location indication issue was identified and resolved by repairing the local station controller.

Following a technical review shortly after these failures, a number of improvement measures were identified and implemented to significantly improve the reliability of the existing Jubilee line train radio system. This system will be replaced by the Connect Radio system later this Year.

Finally, be assured that we are doing everything possible to reduce the risk of train radio failures, especially those that could become service affecting.



## REPORT

## Announcements unclear at some stations

A reporter is concerned that station announcements at some stations are unclear and difficult to understand - in particular, at Baker Street, Great Portland Street and Edgware Road. In the event of an emergency, the reporter is concerned that passengers would not know what to do. He suggests that the problem may be a combination of factors, including poor acoustic environments and a lack of clear speech.

Could London Underground listen to the announcements made at these particular stations? The reporter says that very recently some announcements have failed to be understood by passengers, adding to the confusion in overcrowding situations. It was like the passengers were being shouted at but no-one understood the content of the communication, he says.

The reporter would like to know whether the staff that make the announcements have had any formal training. Have they been trained to speak with clear intonation? It is suggested that all staff at LUL undergo training on how to make clear announcements for the benefit of the public.



## RESPONSE FROM JUBILEE LINE OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

The responsible LU SQE Adviser visited the Baker Street, Great Portland Street and Edgware Road stations over a two-day period to assess the number and quality of PA's being made at each location at various times. On all occasions, he found the announcements to be clear, audible and could be understood.

He also undertook some analysis of previous surveys undertaken at all three locations and from the data supplied, found that no concerns had been raised regarding the quality of announcements made.

Without knowing the exact date, time, etc, of the announcements made in the report, it is somewhat difficult to pinpoint any specific root cause.

On appointment, Staff is trained in the use of PA equipment and how to speak clearly. The quality of individual announcements is continually assessed via the Competence Assurance Programme



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