

IN THIS ISSUE ▼

TOC and FOC reports:  
Pages 2-3

Infrastructure reports:  
Page 4

Platform reports:  
Page 5

London Underground  
reports: Page 6

CIRAS is a completely impartial system that provides a way for rail industry staff to report safety concerns in confidence. However, concerns about safety should be raised through company channels first, where possible.

Fold here and moisten inside to seal

Postage  
Paid

## FREEPOST CIRAS



# Can you remember 0800 4 101 101?

It is important that CIRAS regularly reviews how it operates and communicates with you to make sure that we are providing the best possible service to you and, in turn, the rail industry. Every well-

marketed company has its recognisable features – whether it's the universally recognised symbol of the golden arches, the red drinks can with swirling white writing, or those two blokes with moustaches – and I'm sure you can remember their telephone number too. Ah yes, telephone numbers... It had been pointed out to the CIRAS team that the freephone number wasn't particularly memorable, and that this may have an effect on the number of contacts CIRAS receives. Embracing the challenge, CIRAS set about getting a new freephone number that even a goldfish could remember! And the result is **0800 4 101 101**.

**"the old and new numbers will run in parallel for 12 months"**

CIRAS plan to launch this new number in early September, although it is already in use. As well as appearing on all new CIRAS literature and merchandise, including the website, Network Rail has offered to feature the number on all new sentinel cards, which is fantastic news for CIRAS.

But don't worry if you have any literature or merchandise with the old number on it – both the old and new numbers will run in parallel for at least 12 months and the text number and freepost address remain the same.

It will be interesting to see if the new number has an effect on the number of contacts CIRAS receives. See the CIRAS website – [www.ciras.org.uk](http://www.ciras.org.uk) – for this and other statistics.



The new number is now working and available for you

YES

NO

DON'T KNOW

## Fact versus fiction

**Myth: CIRAS is owned by the industry**

The second myth about CIRAS in the Fact vs Fiction series looks at the common misconception that CIRAS is owned by the industry – therefore how can reporters trust that their concerns will be listened to and reports kept confidential?

The reality is that CIRAS operates as an entirely impartial and independent unit based in the RSSB office in London. The CIRAS team work in a secure room with access limited to CIRAS team members. All confidential electronic documents are kept on a separate IT system and confidential paper work is kept in a locked safe. CIRAS's role is simply to take reports about safety concerns and facilitate a response without judgement of the company or recrimination for the reporter, thus adding value and helping the railway industry to be even safer.

## IN SHORT

With help from your reports to CIRAS:

- Southern reassured a reporter that a bridge between Crowborough and Buxted, which was hit by a tree, had been inspected by Network Rail and is safe. It was agreed that Network Rail will inspect structures hit by any large, heavy tree at the time of the incident; and
- Network Rail clarified when a medical check is required for PTS card validation – the full report, including the detailed clarification, is available at [www.ciras.org.uk](http://www.ciras.org.uk).

## CIRAS NEWS

- CIRAS is producing a new short DVD, available for staff inductions and training. Copies will be available in early autumn – to order in advance please email [clare.alder@ciras.org.uk](mailto:clare.alder@ciras.org.uk).

- CIRAS's autumn reps' meetings will be held in London and York in November. We hope that the main topic – adding value – will encourage interesting discussion. We look forward to seeing your company's CIRAS rep there.



## EDITORIAL

- Editor: Clare Alder  
email: [clare.alder@ciras.org.uk](mailto:clare.alder@ciras.org.uk)  
tel: 020 3142 5361
- General Enquiries: [enquiries@ciras.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ciras.org.uk)  
Please note that CIRAS cannot accept reports at this email address.
- Electronic Newsletter: if you would like to receive an electronic copy of *The Reporter*, email us at [newsletterrequests@ciras.org.uk](mailto:newsletterrequests@ciras.org.uk).
- The full version of all reports and responses contained in *The Reporter* are available on the CIRAS website [www.ciras.org.uk](http://www.ciras.org.uk).

## Safety briefings for conductors

A reporter is concerned that conductors working for London Midland are not receiving the safety briefings every 12 weeks when they are rostered to. This is said to be an issue at many different depots. According to the reporter, conductors should be rostered to receive a safety briefing every 12 weeks which provides information on the current drugs and alcohol policy, seasonal effects on the working environment and general information on safe operating.

Can London Midland ensure that all conductors receive safety briefings every 12 weeks when they are rostered to?



Conductors should be receiving a safety briefing every 12 weeks

### Response from London Midland

London Midland are committed to ensuring all colleagues are regularly briefed on all safety and mandatory health and safety matters, currently we are reviewing how we communicate occupational safety and operational safety/standards items to all train crew to come into line with the current industry best practice. Unfortunately due to a variety of reasons we have been unable to consult these changes for conductors, thus the current process of safety training and update days (STUD) will remain, with the next brief commencing in May.

**"currently we are reviewing how we communicate occupational safety"**

To improve the performance and attendance at certain depots, we are currently redesigning the method of resourcing the STUD release and removing STUD from the links, however this does not change the requirements for attendance and at these locations conductors will be released on the daily rostering system.

The full version of this report and response is available on the CIRAS website.

## Loud volume of AWS bell and warning horn on class 357s



Does a class 357 have the correct type of AWS bell and warning horn?

A reporter has contacted CIRAS to express concern that the AWS bell and warning horn in the driver cab of the class 357s are too loud, potentially leading to long term hearing damage for drivers. The AWS speaker on the class 357s is positioned on the left hand side of the driver's cab and is only a short distance from the driver's left ear. The reporter believes that if the AWS speaker was positioned further away on the other side of the cab, this may go some way to easing the volume of the sound emitted.

### For RSSB:

Can RSSB clarify whether the AWS bell and warning horns in the class 357s are within the group standard and whether they are the correct type of AWS bell and warning

## Shornemead crossing danger at Hoo Junction depot

A reporter has raised concerns over risks present at the Shornemead crossing at Hoo Junction depot. According to the reporter, there have been a number of near misses on this farm crossing, involving both pedestrians and private vehicles, but no decisive steps have yet been taken to improve the situation.

Shornemead crossing is situated just outside Hoo Junction depot, on the up-side of the main lines. It is regularly crossed by trains being shunted from Hoo Junction depot onto the main lines and back. For this purpose a position light is in place before the crossing. When shunting long trains, drivers often have trouble seeing the position light from the cab, as they could be a few hundred yards away, waiting for the signal to clear so they can propel back into the siding. The signal is particularly hard to see if it is sunny or hazy weather. According to the reporter, Network Rail did agree to install a repeater signal a couple of years ago, but nothing has happened. Further, if the train is not blocking the crossing whilst waiting for permission to propel back, there is a risk that pedestrians will start to cross behind the train, as they do not expect the train to reverse because they are not familiar with the workings of the railway.

The reporter feels that the general public should not have access to this crossing at all. Only the farmer is supposed to have access to opening the locked gates at Shornemead crossing. According to the reporter however, it seems that many other people have been given copies of the key and some do not bother to call the signaller before crossing despite the instructions on display. When

**"the real issue here is that the public are able to gain access through an unlocked gate"**

staff propel trains out of the depot, there is not a clear view of the crossing, and if a member of the public is crossing without the signaller's permission they could easily be hit by the train.

### For Network Rail and DB Schenker:

- The reporter suggests that Network Rail and DB Schenker should carry out a joint risk assessment on the systems of working around this crossing. Is this possible?



### Response from DB Schenker:

The issue of access to the crossing isn't as straight forward as first appears. There are approximately seven official key holders, along with pedestrian access to the public. Work has been done jointly with Network Rail in the past to try and reduce the risks. As a result of this report DB Schenker's Area Production Manager (APM) for Hoo Junction has raised this issue at a meeting with Local Network Rail Management.

The Method of Work and a Risk Assessment have recently been reviewed and we believe they meet our internal and statutory requirements. The real issue here is that the public are able to gain access through an unlocked gate. Our APM has stated to Network Rail that given that this was not a public right of way the best option would be to remove the gate. This would reduce the risk to 'key holders' of the vehicle access gate, which is controlled by a process involving a telephone direct to the signaller.

The difficulty DB Schenker has is that mainline crossings are the responsibility of Network Rail and DBS can only try to influence their process. We will continue to press for closure of the pedestrian gate.

The full version of this report and response is available on the CIRAS website.

### Response from RSSB

The class 357 Electrostar units would have been built with an AWS system compliant to RGS GE/RT8035. This mandates the audibility of the AWS system in the cab and sets minimum and maximum sound pressure level outputs. The audibility requirement has not changed for quite a while and encompasses being able to hear

**"it is known that this level is not appropriate for modern sealed rolling stock"**

warning sounds above a background noise (for example imagine a class 47 going through a tunnel with the window open!). However it is known that this level is not appropriate for modern sealed rolling stock with air conditioned cabs and a number of

derogations have now been granted to reduce the sound levels in cabs, including other Electrostars. It may be appropriate for c2c to modify their fleet in line with a Bombardier developed modification – however this would be up to the railway undertaking to decide. The formal answer is that the vehicles were designed to be compliant with the applicable standards.

### Response from c2c

We will be fitting a foam muffle to the speaker to reduce the volume as per successful trials on similar fleets. We are currently waiting for the material to be delivered. Once the delivery has been received the modification will be completed.

The full version of this report and response is available on the CIRAS website.

## Interim voice radio system black spots

Two reporters have come to CIRAS independently about the same issue relating to the interim voice radio system (IVRS) and poor reception on a stretch of track about a mile and a half long between Tapton and Wingfield. This section of track has recently had a new safety system installed and axle counters have now replaced the track circuit system there. IVRS handsets, used for emergency communications between all train drivers in an area and the signaller, have consequently been issued to CrossCountry drivers as a replacement to track circuit operating clips for use in emergency situations.

The reporters say GSM-R reception here is inconsistent and there are recognised black spots. This has been acknowledged by Network

**"is there anything being done to address the issue of black spots?"**

Rail in the weekly operating notices (WON). As a result of this, ASLEF have advised a maximum of 40 mph speed restriction, which has now been agreed and is in place. There are several safety concerns that the reporters would like to see addressed.

**For Network Rail:**  
Both reporters are concerned about the poor radio reception. In an area with reception black spots, if there were a derailment of some sort there would be no way of communicating the situation to other drivers. Track operating clips do not work on this section because there is no track circuit here.

-Is anything being done to address the issue of black spots?

-Is there likely to be any resolution of this issue sometime soon?

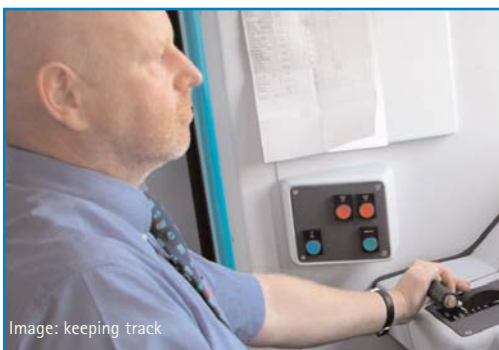
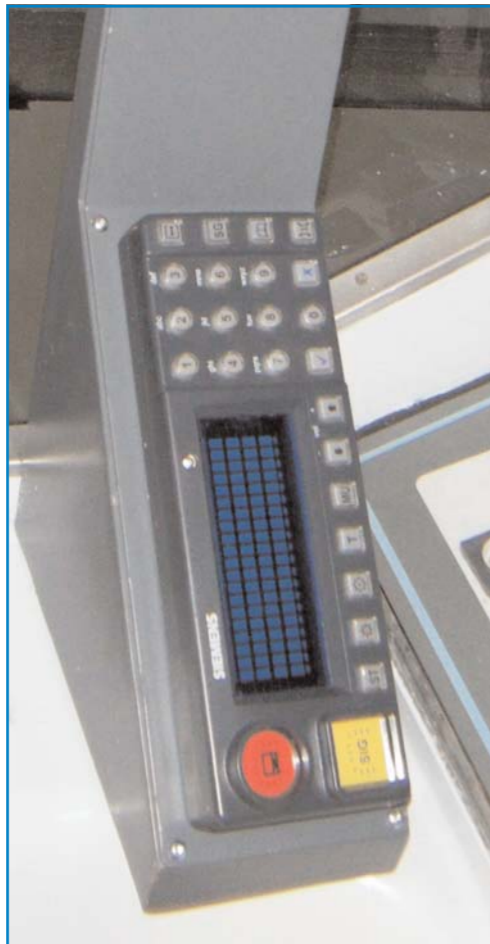


Image: keeping track

Communicating to drivers is essential



GSM-R radio communications are currently being installed across the network

**For CrossCountry:**  
The reporters would like some reassurance that safety will remain the first priority, and that drivers can continue to travel at safe speeds over this section of track until the IVRS issue is resolved.

In addition, train managers have not been trained on the use of IVRS and have been told to continue normal emergency protection, which means using track circuit clips and detonators. In the event of an emergency on this section, track circuit clips would not work (again because there is no track circuit) to put the signal back to danger.

And train managers do not know how to use the IVRS handsets in the event that the train driver was incapacitated. Please comment on this apparent loophole. Will IVRS training be given to train managers?

**"The technical fix was implemented... and the IVRS system now has full coverage within the Tapton and Wingfield area"**

### Response from Network Rail:

The East Midlands Re-signalling Project has been developing a solution to resolve the black spot issue. The technical fix was implemented on the 28/11/08 at 11:20 and the IVRS system now has full coverage within the Tapton and Wingfield area. The temporary speed restriction has now been removed.

### Response from CrossCountry trains:

Safety is paramount and in this case it became apparent during tests that there was an area where the IVRS reception was not guaranteed. Temporary arrangements were implemented in the 'black spot' by the provision of additional lineside telephones. However, a new base station has since been installed and the area in question now has full IVRS reception.

The issue of training drivers in the use of IVRS was agreed during the early implementation of IVRS and axle counter schemes as part of the West Coast Route Modernisation program. The risk assessment and safety cases for axle counter schemes with IVRS endorsed this arrangement and all subsequent resignalling schemes utilising axle counters in track circuit block areas have

**"a new base station has since been installed and the area now has full IRVS reception"**

followed this process. The training material provided by Network Rail has been subject to review since the initial axle counter signalling schemes were introduced and CrossCountry has been involved in its advancement to provide quality information to train drivers. The introduction of GSM-R radio communications system that is currently being installed across the network will, in the near future, make old radio systems such as NRN, CSR and IVRS obsolete. GSM-R will be superior to all of the old systems and will be used on all routes, irrelevant of the type of train detection in use. [The full version of this report and response is available on the CIRAS website.](#)

## Self-dispatch concerns

A concern has been raised regarding a new self-dispatch procedure due to be implemented at Liverpool Lime Street and Manchester Airport stations at the beginning of April 2009. Under conditions of the new procedure, conductors are expected to dispatch their trains on their own without the help of platform dispatch staff. Some platforms at Liverpool Lime Street are on a curve and the signal sighting is poor, and the reporter feels this could present a safety risk if a conductor misread the signal and potentially send a train through a red signal. The reporter disagrees with First Transpennine Express (FTPE) that the white light on the dispatch button is adequate to indicate that the signal is clear. At Manchester Airport in particular, with top train working, there is an added risk that conductors could become confused as to



which train the OFF indicator is for. With high volumes of people on the platforms at both stations, the reporter suggests that

FTPE refrain from implementing self-dispatch at these stations and continue to provide a member of dispatch staff on the platform.

### Response from FTPE

First TransPennine Express would like to thank the reporter for highlighting their concerns. Whenever a new system of work is to be considered, we are required under the Railways and Other Guided Transport Systems Regulations to carry out a full safety validation. FTPE were accompanied by the HMRI on a visit to Liverpool Lime Street and a full risk assessment was carried out, the proposed self dispatch method was fully approved however a new agreement was reached with Northern Rail and the company took the decision to continue with Northern's assistance. We emphasise that this was not for reasons of safety. At Manchester Airport, a Safety Validation has been completed for the proposed self dispatch method of working and a review meeting held. The risks at this location have been assessed jointly by FTPE and Northern and any new method of work will ensure any risk is as low as is reasonably practicable. A review meeting is planned for the beginning of August. [The full version of this report and response is available on the CIRAS website.](#)

## Ticket barrier operation at Waterloo

Ticket barriers at Waterloo station on Saturdays and match days are concerning one reporter. The barriers in question – those near platforms 15-18 where trains leave for Twickenham – are not fully utilised with passengers being directed in a potentially hazardous flow. The reporter worries that this could lead to overcrowding – dangerous for commuters and station staff alike. On match days in particular, there is a risk of passengers being pushed onto or falling onto empty tracks or being pushed onto barriers unnecessarily.

Part of the problem appears to be an operational instruction on match days which states that no barriers should be turned around without seeking management approval. According to the reporter it is not always possible to seek approval during busy periods. Could more responsibility of operating the barriers and making short-term changes be given to the barrier operators and does the final responsibility of operating the barriers lie with the barrier operators or control room staff? Also, could the operational flowchart be reviewed and plans put in place to address the passenger flow concerns raised by this reporter?

### Response from South West Trains

South West Trains would like to thank the reporter for raising this concern. South West Trains would like to reassure the reporter that the issues raised have been reviewed and actioned by the relevant departments. A comprehensive action plan exists for the operation of the automatic ticket gates at Waterloo station.

The processes were developed through a series of hazard and operability studies, risk assessments and passenger modelling and were signed off by stakeholders prior to implementation. Since full operation commenced in January 2009 two formal reviews have taken place with another one scheduled. A separate crowd management plan exists for special events.

**"the instruction to staff will be re-briefed to remove any doubt"**

Monitoring of crowd movements takes place from a central control room, which has comprehensive CCTV coverage of the gates with the ability to open gated sections both individually and collectively. Operatives will also take into account if the passenger concentration is either static or dynamic. No operational instruction exists on match days which states that 'no barriers should be turned around without seeking management approval' however changing the configuration of barriers does need to be justified with the control room to ensure there is no knock on effect. The instruction to staff will be re-briefed to remove any doubt.

The responsibility for operating the barriers lies with the barrier operators. A gate operator may change the directional flow, if necessary, without seeking management approval first. The overview of congestion across the whole gateline sits with the control room staff, both sets of staff act in conjunction with each other ensuring the correct decisions are made. If an incident occurred where crushing against the barriers was likely, the gate operative or the control room could open the gates using emergency open button. As requested, the local management team will review the operational flowchart to ascertain if any improvements can be made.

[The full version of this report and response is available on the CIRAS website.](#)



Image: Chris McKenna

