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

Sentinel cards



Sentinel card holders will now find it even easier to contact CIRAS as the CIRAS logo and freephone number 0800 4 101 101 will now appear on the new design of the cards (sample shown above). The new cards went into distribution at the end of January 2010.

This means that over 100,000 people working on the railway will have access to the CIRAS number at all times. Would your company follow suit?

Your experience

Occasionally CIRAS is asked to describe an 'average' reporter. Sometimes there is an assumption behind the question that people who report to CIRAS are fairly new to the industry and still quite naive as to how the railway operates. People are often surprised to hear that in fact, sixty five per cent of all rail staff who contact CIRAS with safety concerns have at least ten years' experience in the industry.

"65 per cent of all rail staff who contact CIRAS have at least ten years' experience"

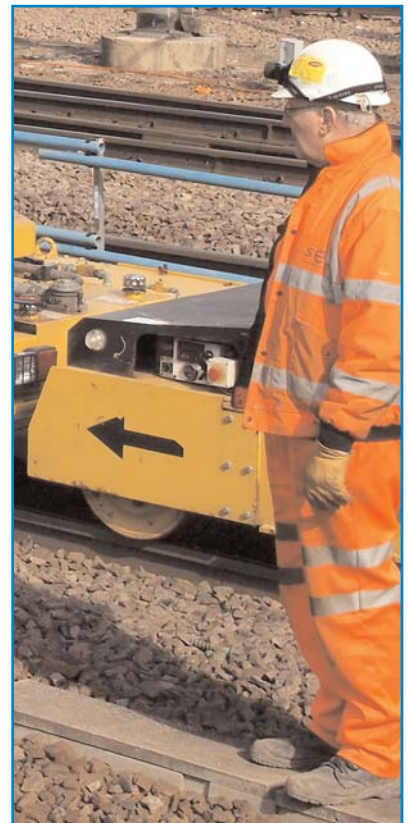
Usually these reporters have gained a depth of operational understanding over a significant period of time. This enables staff to identify good practice and highlight areas that could be improved.

It is vital, however, that all individuals can raise safety concerns with the clear knowledge that their reports will be listened to and investigated. The majority of companies that CIRAS contacts

welcome the opportunity to examine the issues highlighted. They recognise that CIRAS can be a vital tool in assisting their comprehensive safety management systems, with each report received providing an opportunity to demonstrate to their staff a commitment to continuous improvement.

Traditionally, the railway industry has gained experience after an accident or incident has actually occurred. As we all know, this reactive approach is costly both morally and financially. CIRAS is designed to support a proactive safety culture where both managers and their staff feel comfortable reporting whether it be through internal channels or via CIRAS - knowing it will be fully examined.

CIRAS will continue to provide a completely impartial service for all rail industry staff to report safety concerns in confidence. In our experience commitment to CIRAS benefits both company and individual alike.



Safety is everyone's responsibility

"CIRAS can be a vital tool in assisting comprehensive safety management systems"

Interesting statistics



- CIRAS has received over 550 contacts in the last twelve months (from April 2009).
- Currently 80 per cent of company feedback forms are being completed and returned to CIRAS. This is due to an improved response all round, as well as a concerted effort by Network Rail.
- The percentage of reports produced this year that has led to an investigation or actual change currently stands at 43 per cent.

IN SHORT

With help from your reports to CIRAS:

- Tube Lines carried out a site visit following a report raised by agency staff, who were working at Clapham South station. Subsequently it was agreed that all HSE measures will be reviewed, PPE checks will be made, the project manager will make regular site visits and the site will undergo a 'Beacon assessment'.
- Network Rail installed a new ventilation system, in response to a report that there was poor ventilation at Effingham maintenance shed.

CIRAS NEWS

- CIRAS exhibited at the RMT National Health and Safety Advisory Conference in February. Over 90 delegates attended. The theme was fatigue.



CIRAS will also be exhibiting at the TSSA Annual Conference on Monday 24 May in Dublin. If you are also attending please do visit the stand.

- Would you like a member of the team to make a presentation about CIRAS at one of your safety briefings? We always welcome opportunities to talk to front line staff about our service. Simply contact Keely Morley.

EDITORIAL

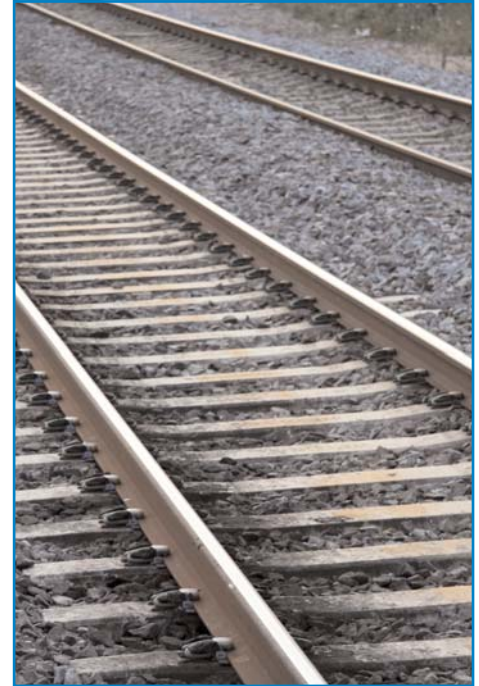
- Contact: Keely Morley
email: keely.morley@ciras.org.uk
tel: 020 3142 5362
- General Enquiries: enquiries@ciras.org.uk
Please note that CIRAS cannot accept reports at this email address.
- Electronic Newsletter: if you would like to receive an electronic copy of *The Reporter*, email us at newsletterrequests@ciras.org.uk.
- The full version of all reports and responses contained in *The Reporter* are available on the CIRAS website www.ciras.org.uk.

'Rough riding' near Castle Cary station

A reporter is concerned about 'rough riding' on a section of track about a quarter of a mile west of Castle Cary station on the Paddington to Penzance route.

This section of track has always had a slight camber, but there is a very noticeable jolt at line speed. From the cab, there appears to be a visible distortion in the track where it sinks and then rises up again. The origin of the distortion is not known, but the reporter suspects it may have something to do with very heavy freight trains passing over this particular section.

"All the work done, and subsequent improvements, has been as a result of this report"



There is a very noticeable jolt at line speed

Some drivers slow down when approaching this section of track; however, some do not, suggesting that not everyone is aware of the perceived problem. The reporter comments that the jolt has become more noticeable in the last three months. On board the train, passengers are finding themselves lurching from one side to another with the clear potential for an injury if someone lost their balance and fell.

Could Network Rail:

- investigate this particular section of track? Is there any need for a temporary speed restriction here perhaps?

Could First Great Western:

- ask their drivers for feedback on this section and provide the appropriate advice?

Response from First Great Western:

First Great Western would like to thank the reporter for bringing their concerns to our attention. Since this report Network Rail have already done a lot of work to enhance the condition of the track. First Great Western will continue to press Network Rail to find a permanent solution to the problem. Until then First Great Western will carry on monitoring the ride quality over this section of track. The feedback from traincrew already acknowledges an improvement. All the work done and the subsequent improvements have been as a result of this report.

For more TOC reports and responses please visit our website www.ciras.org.uk

Anti-social behaviour at Guildford station

A reporter highlights the anti-social behaviour and trespassing at Guildford station. Reducing four security guards to one has made an effective response more difficult. Individuals under the influence of alcohol attempt to get on the tracks and start fights in the station, becoming too much for a single guard to handle. The reporter asks if the station could be closed between the last train and first departure, or alternatively be equipped with more security guards?



Image: Arriva436

Guildford station

Response from South West Trains:

South West Trains share these concerns. A public right of way exists across the station preventing it from closing at night. Local residents objected to changing this. Previously, four security guards were provided Friday to Saturday nights. After a review, this changed to two plus one guard Sunday to Thursday. The review determined this was adequate. The quality of security has improved and the situation continues to be monitored.

Concerns about 'unsafe' cleaning methods and PTS requirements

A reporter is concerned about methods used by cleaning staff when cleaning out wagons owned by DB Schenker at a Peak Forest depot.

The cleaning staff place ladders against the wagons and climb these in order to jet wash the inside. The reporter feels this method is unsafe as the ladders quite often have an unstable footing and if the train were to move whilst being cleaned there is the potential for staff to sustain serious injuries.

"the reporter believes there to be a safer method"

It is believed that this method is being employed as there is currently a shortage of wagons, as a result the wagons need to be cleaned out quickly in order to be used on another job. The reporter believes there to be a 'safer' method whereby cleaners wear safety harnesses and use scaffolding in order to clean the wagons.

In addition to this cleaning staff are not PTS trained. The reporter has been informed that as staff have a radio to communicate with the driver and receive a job brief they do not need PTS training.

For RSSB:

- Do cleaning staff need PTS training to carry out the work described above?
- Does the *Rule Book* set out a safe method of working when cleaning out wagons in a depot?

For DB Schenker:

- Is the above method for cleaning wagons considered 'safe'?
- Are there any precautions DB Schenker would recommend for this kind of work?



For more FOC reports and responses please visit our website www.ciras.org.uk

Staff have a radio to communicate with the driver

Response from RSSB:

From the description there seems to be little doubt that the staff involved in cleaning the wagons must for at least part of the time be 'on or near the line', (within three metres of the nearest rail). *Section 3.2 c of module G1 of the Rule Book* sets out conditions that must be met in order to go 'on or near the line', the first of which is that the person must have been passed as competent in Personal Track Safety (PTS). However, the RSSB *Rule Book* is only mandated on Network Rail managed infrastructure.

In answer to the second question, *module T10 of the Rule Book* sets out the arrangements for protecting personnel when working on rail vehicles. These arrangements vary depending on how the line or siding concerned is categorised. Before any work can start, the system of protection appropriate for a siding or running line in that category must be set up. Whilst the details can change, this always involves precautions against two main hazards, firstly the movement of vehicles whilst they are being worked on, and secondly, other movements entering the siding and then coming into contact with or moving the vehicles being worked on. Protection of this nature is required before any work takes place on the outside of a vehicle, or before ladders are used inside a vehicle. Again however, the RSSB *Rule Book* is only mandated on Network Rail managed infrastructure.

Response from DB Schenker:

DB Schenker Rail (UK) Construction Business Segment was asked about cleaning options for the wagons. The wagons were considered to be contaminated with a particular type of product and they required cleaning before another type was loaded.

There is no shortage of wagons but, in order to keep asset utilisation high and maintain excellent customer service, a reputable contractor was asked to put forward a proposal for the cleaning process. A safe system of work with risk assessment was presented, and in the three months the work took place the contractors were protected at all times by DB Schenker staff on DB Schenker infrastructure. No personal accidents or near misses were reported and a review of this method was planned. In the meantime a more efficient wagon type has been found, and this process has ceased.

"a review will be undertaken by all concerned if this process is required again"

Precautions were in place by both contractor and DB Schenker, however, a review will be undertaken by all concerned if this process is required again in the future.



Image: Phil Scott

Kidwelly station fencing and slip, trip and fall concerns



Image: Steve Wilding

Approaching Kidwelly station

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:

1. Network Rail will lay tarmac footpath from the station access point at the level crossing to the top of the platform ramp.
2. The trackside fencing will be replaced by Network Rail with 1.5m high 'Broxap Warrington' type, bow topped fencing.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Arriva Trains Wales will highlight in yellow the edges of the platform paving slabs to clearly demarcate the changes in platform surfaces.

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; and
- 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.

“Kidwelly station... is in dire need of modernisation”

The reporter suggests that Network Rail and Arriva Trains Wales cooperate to help:

- complete the resurfacing 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; and
- provide clear platform signage and markings, especially where the platform slopes.



Image: www.Broxap.com

New Broxap Warrington fencing will be installed

Non-compliant red lights on buffer stop 'a distraction'

A reporter is concerned about a distracting red tail light being used on a buffer stop at the end of a shunting road in Crewe.

This buffer stop is in the London North Western regional maintenance yard, which is privately owned. The reporter says that according to the *Rule Book*, buffer stops adjacent to the mainline should be illuminated with two white lights, rather than the flashing red tail light used in this case. In other instances, it would be correct for red lights to go on buffer stops. The crucial difference here is that this buffer stop is adjacent to the mainline.

At night, drivers need to know it is a siding, rather than another train in front of them. It is distracting because as drivers leave or pass Crewe, they perceive themselves

to be approaching the back of a freight train as the red light is in their line of vision.

Drivers were apparently told this would be a temporary measure. However, 12 months on the red tail light is still there. The reporter is concerned that being habituated to this light could mean if there actually were a freight train on the line ahead, a driver might well ignore it because no action is normally required at present.

Please could Network Rail investigate with a view to making the light *Rule Book* compliant?



This buffer stop is adjacent to the mainline

Response from Network Rail:

Network Rail would like to thank the reporter for bringing their concerns to our attention. The lights referred to in the report are not on Network Rail managed infrastructure; they are in a private sidings.

The issue was raised with the LNWR Safety Manager for response. LNWR confirmed that the red lamps on the buffer stop within their facility were removed in January 2010 and that they will make arrangements to paint their buffer stop white and fit reflective strips. The removal of the red lamps will address the concerns raised in the CIRAS report.

For more infrastructure reports and responses please visit our website www.ciras.org.uk

How to make a report – 4 easy steps

Do you have a safety concern? Making a report to CIRAS is easy:

- 1 You can contact us by:
 - freephone 0800 4 101 101
 - text 07507 285887
 - freepost CIRAS - a report form is available in every issue of *The Reporter* or you can download a form from our website www.ciras.org.uk.
- 2 We write a report on your behalf

At a convenient time, and outside of working hours, one of our trained staff will discuss your concern with you. We will then write a report that will not contain any identifying information. To process the report we do require your name and contact details so that we can write to you but contact information is never passed on to anyone else and it will be destroyed once the issue has been resolved.
- 3 We send the report to the relevant company

Once the report is finalised we will then send this to the relevant company.

- 4 We feedback the company response to you

When we receive the company response we forward this information on to you. We also include an evaluation form for you to complete - we value your feedback!

CIRAS publishes a selection of reports and responses in *The Reporter*, however you can find all of the reports and responses we have received on our website. These are also grouped according to the various sectors.

If you have a safety concern don't stay silent, talk to CIRAS.





Staff may end up working up to nine consecutive days

"staff are less able to deal with an emergency"

Fatigued staff less responsive to incidents

A reporter is concerned that the amount of overtime being worked at the Finsbury Park group of stations on the Piccadilly line is affecting the ability of station supervisors to respond to incidents effectively.

The stations affected in this group are: Caledonian Road, Holloway Road, Arsenal, Manor House, and Finsbury Park. It is claimed that the actual level of overtime being worked is being masked by transferring hours over to the following month. The reporter believes that anyone working more than 40 additional hours overtime is breaching the regulations. Exceedances happen frequently and systematically, but are said to be largely ignored. Another effect of working more overtime is that staff may end up working up to nine consecutive days.

This all contributes to fatigue and reduced mental alertness, meaning staff are less able to deal with an emergency.

Another consequence is that they are less able to check the work contractors have done. On occasion, supervisors are so tired they fail to make it down the stairs to check the work that is meant to have been completed. The actual overtime worked in a given month is recorded on the Sutor sheets, which show any exceptions to regular working at stations.

The reporter suggests that:

- the permissible number of hours per month worked on overtime be clarified; and
- the Sutor sheets be cross-referenced with the station log books.

Response from LUL:

There is an independent audit into reports of possible breaches of working patterns including overtime procedures involving the Finsbury Park Group. The recommendations will be used to ensure compliance to the framework agreement. Overtime working is by mutual agreement between the member of staff and the group station manager, or their representative. Where overtime work is necessary it is rotated amongst the staff to ensure an even spread. Full time staff are not expected to work more than 30 per cent in excess of their contractual hours in any four week period.

Overtime working is approved and signed off by duty managers who issue a reference number (overtime number) as authorisation for the overtime to be worked. A requirement of the LU Competency Management System is that staff take sufficient rest and relaxation in accordance with LU Framework prior to attending duty to ensure personal alertness and fitness at all times. Due to local activities at Finsbury Park station, football and other sport events at the Arsenal Emirates Stadium there are opportunities for staff to do overtime working when available, especially on match days. Overtime hours are entered on 'SAP' system which is monitored as part of the Centurion Manager System checks.



For more LUL reports and responses please visit our website www.ciras.org.uk

Unhygienic toilet facilities

One reporter believes that the portable toilet facilities provided on site at Aldgate East station are unhygienic. There is no lighting in or near the toilets and as a result staff are unable to see what they are doing and also cannot see to wash their hands. Further to this, the water supply for the sinks is open within the toilet and so the

reporter fears that staff could be washing their hands in contaminated water. For staff to be able to see what they are doing the toilet door has to be left open, which is not ideal. In addition, the reporter mentions that drinking water is not provided on site, meaning staff are unable to have a drink before their shift or during their breaks.

Could Balfour Beatty comment on the possibility of:

- installing lighting near or within the portable toilets; and
- providing staff with access to drinking water whilst on site.



A lack of lighting is causing a problem

Response from Balfour Beatty:

We have experienced some problems with regards to the lighting levels and cleanliness of the portable toilets provided for our contractors working at Aldgate East station. There has been a recent significant increase in the number of people using these facilities and, following a review, we have increased the frequency of cleaning from three to six times a week to meet the demands. All the original toilets have now been removed from site and new units installed fully equipped with hot and cold running water.

The lack of lighting has also been addressed with all the individual units now having their own mains bulkhead lighting installed. There has always been access to drinking water whilst on site, but this had been relocated to a newly redecorated room and it is possible that some operatives had not been advised of its whereabouts. We apologise for this lapse in communication and have now addressed the situation at our pre shift meetings.

Fold here and moisten inside to seal

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