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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.

Your shout!!

It's in everyone's interest to promote health and safety issues within the workplace. CIRAS offers you an opportunity to bring to the attention of your company, safety issues that you may come across in your daily work. CIRAS offers you a system that is completely confidential but not anonymous. Although we take the details from the caller they are treated in the strictest confidence and are always destroyed after a period of time.

"Although we take the details from the caller, they are treated in the strictest confidence"

CIRAS deals with a range of safety issues in the rail industry and at all levels. It has to be said that there are certain issues that do arise repeatedly. CIRAS is able to resolve and collate this information which is instrumental in marking trends that can help the rail industry in taking precautionary safety measures.

The CIRAS team thought that you may be interested in reading an extract from a typical interview. The transcript displayed arose about an issue that revolved around platform markers, which help with the dispatch process, being removed and not replaced by contractors. The problem did get resolved to the satisfaction of the rail worker and local managers. This is just one of the many health and safety issues that the CIRAS team help resolve on a daily basis.



interview snapshot

An extract of an interview carried out by one of our researchers.

CIRAS: 'Thanks for bringing this to our attention – have you brought this issue up before and if so to whom?'

Caller: 'Well yes – I have reported it before'. 'I passed it onto my supervisor and then after that, I reported it to my local management team'. 'I have tried all sorts of ways to get their attention, memos, email and I have even used a couple of feedback forms as well and these I know go up to senior level, to the directors.'

CIRAS: 'Ok, so am I right in saying that you've tried bringing it to the managers' attention using all the correct channels?'

Caller: 'That's right, they're just not interested'. 'The thing is, you need to report these issues, even if you get tagged as a "trouble maker". 'I genuinely have health and safety concerns'. 'And this is totally unacceptable'. 'I raised the issue with my manager last week, but it fell on

deaf ears. He said "Oh! This practice is unacceptable and it won't be allowed to happen", but it's still happening'. 'It's a total disregard of all the rules and procedures'.

CIRAS: 'You have done all the right things with the information that you have given me, and have taken it through all the correct channels, is there anything else that you've told me that could lead to you being identified?' 'We don't refer to the channels that you have mentioned'. 'It's part of our procedures not to feed any of your identifying information back to the company'.

Caller: 'To be honest my main concern is about the health and safety of the travelling public'. 'But I do worry about my job and the jobs of my colleagues'. 'If I drag someone down and drag them to their death, I'm not gonna have that on my conscience'. 'At the end of the day, there is not much else you can do'.



TSSA Conference

CIRAS took part in TSSA's annual conference held in Dublin, with an attendance of 150 delegates over 4 days.

CIRAS likes to maintain its strong identity in the industry by covering key conferences with TSSA being one of them. Talking to as many people as possible CIRAS helps to promote the use of confidential reporting, making it a safer industry for one and all.



TSSA annual conference 2010

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IN BRIEF

With help from your reports to CIRAS:

- A number of loose fitting windows were reported on Class 1992 stock tube trains on the Central Line recently. London Underground are currently in the process of having an independent check carried out. Remedial work will be carried out by a specialist glazing company and maintenance practices are also being reviewed.
- Network Rail have requested that the owner of a caravan park remove a floodlight as it is creating a dazzling affect, potentially limiting the driver's ability to sight the signal on the Stalybridge line.

CIRAS NEWS

The bi-annual meeting for CIRAS Reps held on 2 June in London and 3 June in York saw 48 Reps attending overall from all sectors, which is an increase of 30% on last year's winter event.



Some of the reps at the London, Paddington venue

The Reps had a productive day discussing key topics such as:

- what is changing for you;
- managers' perceptions;
- the power of a good response;
- listening to the industry

One of the topics was a 'value for you' workshop that gave the Reps an opportunity to work in groups to produce a combined solution. Given some example reports the groups were tasked with analysing each report and setting out the solutions in a template. The Reps found that the open discussion led to some really useful comments and tips that could help them respond to future reports.

We also issued a request form for any of the CIRAS Reps who would like a visit from the CIRAS team – why not suggest this to your company at your next safety briefing.

Bathgate depot pedestrian route



Pot holes on the route present slip, trip and fall hazards

CIRAS was contacted about the state of the pedestrian route at the Bathgate depot. The following problems were highlighted:

- pot holes on the route presented slip trip and fall hazards to pedestrians. The area appeared to be contaminated with oil and with recent weather conditions the problems have worsened;
- although partially paved, the onslaught of heavy machinery running across it added to the problem;
- the reporter understands that this pedestrian route will not be in use indefinitely as the new line and train station being built will change the layout of the depot.



The temporary walking route has been rebuilt

"Following receipt of this report remedial action was taken to remedy defects"

Response from First ScotRail:

Following receipt of this report remedial action was taken to address the defects:

- the temporary walking route has since been rebuilt and enhanced overhead lighting has been installed;
- the contractor has implemented an increased inspection regime to identify any deficiencies in a timely fashion and take any required actions;
- the temporary walking route will be removed by the end of this year when the new Bathgate station will be open and there will be direct access from the station.

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

Overcrowding during weekend engineering works

A reporter is concerned about overcrowding on East Coast services during weekend engineering works.

Particular areas of concern were about the following:

- the ten week engineering programme currently taking place affecting services in and out of London;
- trains being reduced from the normal two or three services an hour down to one;
- trains being so full that staff were unable to walk through the unit, which could lead to difficulty attending to passengers or accessing equipment should there be an emergency.

Although it is understood that East Coast are not responsible for these works the reporter believes the selling of advance purchase tickets is creating the overcrowding.

- the reporter would like to see fewer or no advance purchase tickets sold during planned engineering works in order to ease overcrowding on the restricted services.
- do East Coast trains have a maximum capacity?;
- could East Coast comment on the overcrowding and the suggestion made by the reporter?

Response from East Coast:

East Coast Main Line would like to thank the reporter for raising these concerns:

- the engineering work which is taking place in Hitchin does involve essential maintenance of track and point work, as well as overhead line equipment. Although maintenance has been planned for some considerable time, it did result in a reduction in weekend services;
- with regard to advance purchase tickets due to industry fares regulations, we are obliged to offer 'off peak' weekend tickets.

As a result we took the decision to reduce reserved capacity in standard class by around 100 seats (about 25%) thereby allowing additional capacity for 'walk-up' passengers; and have actively reduced the number of advance purchase fares available on dates affected by the Hitchin engineering works;

"we took the decision to reduce reserved capacity ... by around 100 seats"



Engineering works reduced normal services

- we have used our ticket selling website to advertise the fact that engineering works are taking place, and to advise passengers that reservations should be made on the weekends in question. We are continuing to monitor the effectiveness of these actions;
- East Coast service does have a maximum seating capacity of approximately 530 seats however, there are no limitations on the numbers of passengers who are allowed on board: our train guards are responsible for the safety of the train and are briefed not to take the train forward if they feel it is overcrowded and unsafe to do so.

Toilet waste on tracks in the south west

Toilet waste discharged by First Great Western (FGW) trains onto the tracks between Plymouth and Penzance is a cause of concern for a reporter who is routinely exposed to it in his work. The older trains operated by FGW flush waste directly onto the track. Newer trains utilise a tank which contains the waste before it is emptied and never finds its way onto the track. Overalls worn by track workers can quickly become contaminated by the passing spray, causing unhygienic conditions and health risks. The reporter asks the following:

- could FGW state if there are plans to control the risks? For example, could older rolling stock be refurbished with tanks to contain the waste?

Response from First Great Western:

- First Great Western have recognised that the fitment of toilet retention tanks is an issue and now the majority of railway rolling stock does not discharge toilet waste directly on to the track;
- in light of the current proposals for High Speed Train (HST) replacement FGW have met with the Department for Transport (DfT) and recommended that if HSTs are planned to have life beyond the current FGW franchise then retention tanks should be considered for fitment. This is now subject to the DfT rolling stock strategy.



Image: Chris McKenna

Build up of diesel fumes

Image: Victor Hugo



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

Crewe depot is not designed to run as a diesel shed

Inhaling diesel fumes that build up in the electric maintenance depot at Crewe was a concern for one reporter. The depot has predominantly been used to maintain electric locomotives but in the last year diesel locomotives from Toton are also being maintained here. Crewe depot is not designed to run as a diesel shed with no extraction fans in the ceiling and drains that are only just able to cope with the oil:

- the problem is particularly bad when locomotives are started up after a two/three week period of inactivity when oil pushed through their system causes fumes going up to the roof and across the floor;
- the Scientific team has assessed the air quality in the shed but this was conducted when no locomotives were running. The reporter notes that there is a disused diesel depot at Crewe that was previously run by DB Schenker but is now inactive;
- would one solution be for diesel services to be operated from this old depot?;
- would DB Schenker consider installing a diesel fumes extraction system in this shed so that it is fit for maintaining both electric and diesel locomotives?

Response from DB Schenker:

- Surveys are to be carried out under normal working conditions to gauge the impact of the diesel fumes;
- two specialist companies have recently visited both sites and are in the process of providing various options which will be considered following the receipt of the Scientifics report;
- oil is not dispensed into drains. However, if a spillage occurs the depot interceptor removes any oil residue before outlet to main sewer.

Flank protection still used 'under a new name'

Following a previous CIRAS report (issue 28) querying the use of flank protection (FP) on junctions instead of detonators within T3 possessions in the Anglia route. Several reporters have come to CIRAS saying that the practice is still occurring. This is despite Network Rail's response stating that the practice would no longer be used after June 2009.

Since June, the term 'flank protection' has not been used in Weekly Operating Notices (WONs). However, the WONs now state "points to be kept normal with a reminder appliance as protection". Although the word "flank" is not now used, flank protection arrangements are still in place in all but name. The reporters are concerned that failure to comply with *Rule Book module T3* is still being encouraged. Also, neither is it covered in training or assessment exercises for the Person In Charge of Possession (PICOP). They would like to know:

- if the protection arrangements in the Anglia route could change to comply with the *Rule Book* and with the original Network Rail response; and
- if this is not possible, could a deviation from *Railway Group Standards* be applied for with a certificate for derogation be issued?

Response from Network Rail:

Network Rail would like to thank the reporter for bringing their concerns to our attention.

Following on from this report there has been a discussion with the responsible teams that manage and plan such works and publications. Assurances have been given that this practice has been stopped.

This issue will be monitored closely by the Operations and Customer Services Team locally to make certain that no repeat instances occur. It is our sincere hope that there will be no further occurrences of this practice.

In regard to the second point raised, as a result of the statement above there will be no plan to apply for derogation as there should be no requirement.

"Following on from this report there has been a discussion with the responsible teams"



Detonator protection isn't placed at junctions

Lone dispatch at Rochester Station

Lone dispatch of trains at Rochester station is a concern for one reporter.

The recent removal of platform staff from the station means that conductors have to dispatch trains alone. Normally this would not be a problem:

- however, the platforms at Rochester station have a large curve, meaning that neither the whole train nor the signal can be seen at the same time;
 - this makes it difficult for conductors to dispatch the 10 or 12 car units that stop at the station.
- The reporter suggests:
- that platform staff are reinstated at the station to aid with dispatch or that indicators are installed to inform conductors of the signal aspect.

Could Southeastern comment on:

- whether the practice of lone dispatch at Rochester has been risk assessed.

"has the practice of lone dispatch... been risk assessed?"

Response from Southeastern:

Southeastern would like to thank the reporter for raising these concerns as it gives us an opportunity to explain the process that has to be completed before any changes in dispatch methods can take place:

"this gives us an opportunity to explain the process"

- the changes to dispatch arrangements at Rochester became effective from 7 March 2010 following a full risk assessment and completion of a recommendation made during this risk assessment - namely relocation of the stop car mark on platform three;

These changes were fully consulted with company council, and at the request of company council a further visit to the site was made by a team which included Conductors and a Health and Safety Representative. Furthermore, it was agreed during the consultation process that a full review of the new arrangements would be carried



Rochester station platform

out within three months;

To address the issues specifically raised by the reporter: whether the practice of lone dispatch at Rochester has been risk assessed; and the two suggestions raised by the reporter:

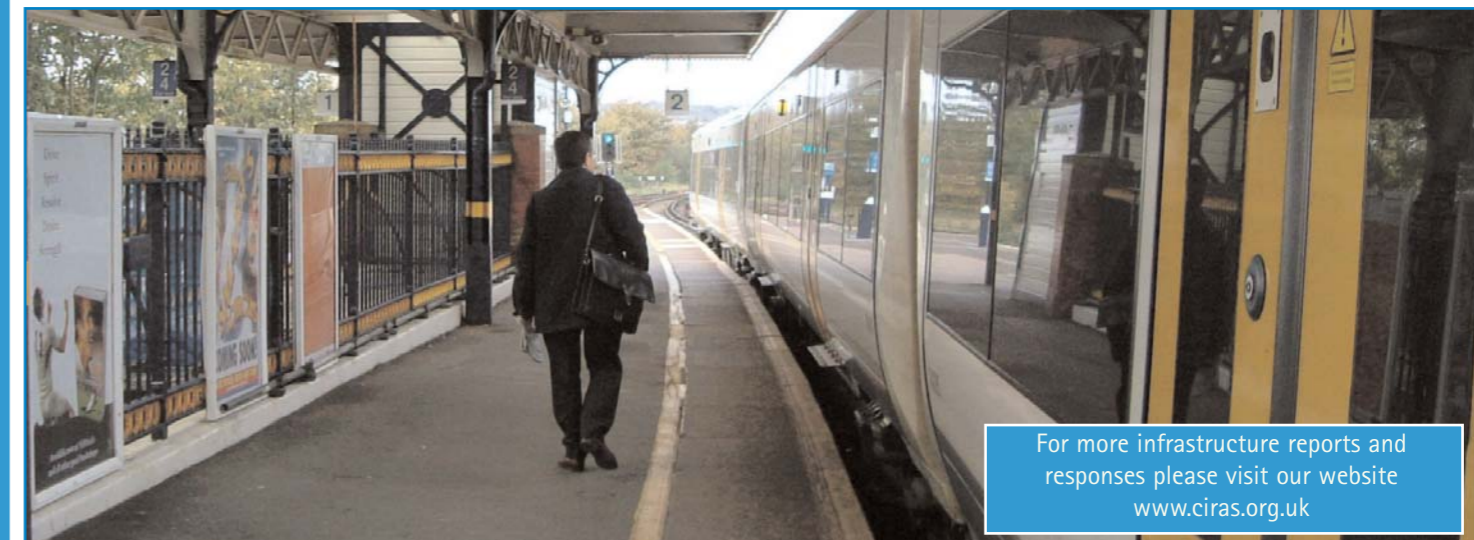
- the dispatch arrangements for Rochester have been risk assessed and a banner repeater is in fact provided on platform two;
- Conductors can, by using the width of the platform, view both the whole length of the train and the starting signal on platform three;
- Operation Inspectors are currently monitoring the method of working and no

issues have been identified or reported;

• there are no plans to change the dispatch arrangements; however, a full review of the dispatch arrangements at Rochester has been actioned.

The team will again consist of Operation Inspectors, local Managers, Conductors and a Health and Safety representative.

Image below: A full review of dispatch arrangements has been actioned



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

