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26 November 2018



Mr Andrew Hall
Deputy Chief Inspector of Rail Accidents
Cullen House
Berkshire Copse Rd
Aldershot
Hampshire GU11 2HP

Dear Andrew,

Track worker near miss incidents at Camden Junction South, London, 28 February 2017

I write to report¹ on the consideration given and action taken in respect of the three recommendations addressed to ORR in the above report, published on 27 November 2017.

The annex to this letter provides details in respect of each recommendation. The status of recommendation 1 is '**implementation on going**'; recommendation 2 is '**insufficient response**'; and recommendation 3 is '**progressing**'.

We will publish this response on the ORR website on 26 November 2018.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Oliver Stewart', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Oliver Stewart

¹ In accordance with Regulation 12(2)(b) of the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005

Initial consideration by ORR

1. All 3 recommendations were addressed to ORR when the report was published on 27 November 2017.
2. After considering the recommendations ORR passed the recommendations Network Rail asking them to consider and where appropriate act upon them and advise ORR of its conclusions. The consideration given to each recommendation is included below.
3. ORR also brought recommendation [X and Y] to the attention of [others] as it was concluded that that there are equally important lessons for them. ORR did not ask these organisations to provide a reply.

Recommendation 1

The intent of this recommendation is to minimise the possibility of information loss through the possession implementation process in large signal boxes and control centres.

Network Rail should review and, where appropriate, improve the possession implementation process in signal boxes and control centres with multiple workstations. The objective of any improvement should be to optimise the management of information (both written and verbal) between signallers and PICOPs (paragraphs 101a, 101a.ii and 102a).

The review should consider:

- the appropriate design and use of additional books and forms that are intended to meet the Rule Book requirements for recording details of possessions and to support signallers' information needs (specifically considering the use of track layout diagrams);
- the content, timing and structure of verbal communications between the PICOP and signallers at different workstations, taking into account the need for all parties to be fully aware of the relevant information at the appropriate time (including, for example, whether a PICOP needs to contact all signallers affected by the possession, and what level of detail should be included in the various conversations between signaller and PICOP);
- the use of tools or technology to support signallers' information management and decision making; and
- local variations in existing application of these processes, in terms of extracting positive elements from such applications as well as smoothing the transition towards a new process for staff groups who have been familiar with an historic convention.

ORR decision

4. We are satisfied with the scope of the review Network Rail have planned into the possession implementation review. We have arranged a meeting with Network Rail to discuss all three recommendations in detail.

5. After reviewing the information provided ORR has concluded that, in accordance with the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005, Network Rail has:

- taken the recommendation into consideration; and
- is taking action to implement it by 30 June 2019.

Status: Implementation ongoing. ORR will advise RAIB when actions to address this recommendation have been completed.

Information in support of ORR decision

6. On 25 July 2018 Network Rail provided the following initial response:

A review will be conducted to look at the delivery element of possessions to identify where any changes to the recording arrangements or rule book requirements are needed. This will build on the work already completed on the planning standards NR/L2/OPS/202 and NR/L2/OPS/303. Specifically the review of possession delivery will focus on these specific areas:

1. *The mechanism for the Signaller to record the possession arrangements by investigating the need for a standardised form or forms and publishing copies of the forms if required.*
2. *Investigate the current rules concerning the communication flow between the Signaller and PICOP to determine whether any changes are required to clarify the level and timing of communication between different parties. This will link to the outputs of bullet point 1 and the need for a form that will act as an aide memoire to the Signaller.*
3. *Investigate the arrangements for the use of reminder appliances in possessions.*
4. *Investigate the interaction between Signallers for possessions over a large area and with intermediate Signallers who do not provide and protection to the possession limits.*

Timescale 30/06/2019

Recommendation 2

The intent of this recommendation is to reduce the risk of confusion arising from the layout and format of the Weekly Operating Notice.

Network Rail should investigate ways to improve the layout and format of the Weekly Operating Notice with a view to optimising readability and compatibility of the information for its users. This work should specifically consider the greater use of diagrams to represent information where appropriate.

ORR decision

7. Network Rail have taken the recommendation into consideration and have concluded that their existing process for providing supplementary information in addition to the WON is satisfactory. We will ask Network Rail to clarify when new systems are in place that can present the information contained in the Weekly Operating Notice such that the recommendation can be considered implemented.

8. After reviewing the information provided ORR has concluded that, in accordance with the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005, Network Rail has:

- taken the recommendation into consideration

Status: Progressing. ORR will advise RAIB when further information is available regarding actions being taken to address this recommendation.

Information in support of ORR decision

9. On 25 July 2018 Network Rail provided the following initial response and a closure statement:

The current planning standards for possessions (NR/L2/OPS/202 and NR/L2/OPS/303) cover the requirement to adequately plan and to produce plans/diagrams for the PICOP briefing pack. The pack must contain a possession diagram with the safe work pack containing the relevant signalling and track diagrams. Where it is deemed necessary this supplementary information can be provided to the Signaller as a diagrammatical representation of the possession. The standards and processes currently allow for this to take place.

The WON is an A5 document and is not suitable for the publication of diagrams. There would be a loss of detail which could add confusion to the Signaller and would not contain any updates made after the WON was published.

The key element is how safety critical communications are structured and broken down into bite sized chunks. The ability to do this is covered within the non-technical skills element of ongoing signaller competence and the safety critical communications training material. The focus should be around reaching a clear understanding when a possession is taken rather than the format in which the possession is published.

It is agreed that the correct information needs to be provided to the Signaller and in the majority of cases the information in the WON is appropriate. There is also a mechanism for signalling diagrams to be provided as part of the possession pack and safe work pack which could be supplied to the Signaller if deemed necessary during the planning process.

Currently there are a number of diagrams being used for possessions to cover the electrical system, signalling system, track system with additional diagrams in the Sectional Appendix and 5 mile line diagrams. What we need as part of the RINF work to redesign the way we advertise our infrastructure is a link to the planning tools. Although not covered by the recommendation it would be sensible for this to be looked at by the System Operator.

To conclude, the information and diagrams are available and could be provided as supplementary information now. The communications and structure of conversations is critical to reaching a clear understanding. This response meets the intent of the recommendation by confirming the status of the WON as a mechanism to publish arrangements and that the critical element is to confirm arrangements on the night with supplementary information provided.

10. On 21 November 2018, Network Rail provided the following update:

Network Rail has investigated whether the Weekly Operating Notice should be updated and changed with a new layout. The review included whether the use of diagrams in the WON would be appropriate to represent the information more accurately.

Network Rail found that the current planning standards for possessions (NRIL2/OPS/202 and NRIL2/OPS/303) cover the requirement to adequately plan and to produce plans/diagrams for the PICOP briefing pack. The pack must contain a possession diagram with the safe work pack containing the relevant signalling and track diagrams. Where it is deemed necessary this supplementary information can be provided to the Signaller as a diagrammatical representation of the possession. The standards and processes currently allow for this to take place. The availability of this information has been briefed to the Route Head of Operations Delivery and Operations Managers to allow them to request the diagrams where necessary during the planning stage.

The WON is an A5 document and is not suitable for the publication of diagrams. There would be a loss of detail which could add confusion to the Signaller and would not contain any updates made after the WON was published.

The key element is how safety critical communications are structured and broken down into bite sized chunks. The ability to do this is covered within the non-technical skills element of ongoing signaller competence and the safety critical communications training material. The focus should be around reaching a clear understanding when a possession is taken rather than the format in which the possession is published.

It is agreed that the correct information needs to be provided to the Signaller and in the majority of cases the information in the WON is appropriate. There is also a mechanism for signalling diagrams to be provided as part of the possession pack and safe work pack which could be supplied to the Signaller if deemed necessary during the planning process.

Currently there are a number of diagrams being used for possessions to cover the electrical system, signalling system, track system with additional diagrams in the Sectional Appendix and 5 mile line diagrams. What we need as part of the RINF work is to redesign the way we advertise our Network Capability with a link to the planning tools. Although not covered by the recommendation, the work is being looked at by the System Operator as part of the Network Capability Steering Group.

To conclude, the information and diagrams are available and could be provided as supplementary information now. The communications and structure of conversations is critical to reaching a clear understanding. This response meets the intent of the recommendation by confirming the status of the WON as a mechanism to publish arrangements and that the critical element is to confirm arrangements on the night with supplementary information provided. As such Network Rail reject the recommendation.

Recommendation 3

The intent of this recommendation is to reduce the exposure of track workers to risk arising from the need to be on track to place or remove possession limit boards and detonators.

Network Rail should, as part of its Track Worker Safe Access Strategy, critically review the possession management process and, where appropriate, reduce the need for staff to be on the track for the purpose of taking or giving back a possession (paragraph 102b). This review should include consideration of newly developed technologies such as remotely operated track circuit operating devices, and the scope for enabling track workers to protect themselves by interacting directly with the signalling and/or train control system.

ORR decision

11. Network Rail have provided information about the general approach and long term goals for improving the process for taking and giving back possessions. We are supportive of the approach being taken and expect to see a more detail plan developed in the coming months.

12. After reviewing the information provided ORR has concluded that, in accordance with the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005, Network Rail has:

- taken the recommendation into consideration; and
- is taking action to implement it, although a fully developed time-bound plan is not yet in place

Status: Progressing. ORR will advise RAIB when further information is available regarding actions being taken to address this recommendation.

Information in support of ORR decision

13. On 6 November 2018 Network Rail provided the following initial response:

Action Plan

Network Rail will critically review the possession management process with the intention of identifying opportunities to reduce the need for staff to be on the track for the purpose of taking or giving back a possession. The review will include consideration of newly developed technologies and the scope for enabling track workers to protect themselves by interacting directly with the signalling and/or train control system.

The general approach to this recommendation was presented and accepted at a meeting attended by the STE Safety Heads and Operations SMEs during February 2018.

Network Rail has agreed with RSSB that they will lead the cross industry workstream development for the review, guided by a Network Rail Senior Programme Manager. The remit for the Project Scoping Workshop is attached.

The workshop was held on during June 2018 with stakeholders from the ORR, the Trades Unions, the Trackworker Safety Group, ISLG and other with the following problem statement definition:

In order to protect track workers involved at the start (set up) and end of the possession (otherwise referred to as taking and giving back possession), work is required to identify the safest way of protecting those workers from the movement of trains.

This will require evaluation of the overall possession management process, focussing on the period of time:

- i (i) Leading up to the start (set up) of the possession through to the confirmed completion of protection of the line, and*
- ii (ii) Leading up to the end of the possession through to the return of control to the signaller.*

The workshop identified potential workstreams and the project team have progressed the development of workstreams, mapping out the risk profile, and preparing a follow-up workshop to review the outputs and to prioritise the workstreams.

A second workshop is planned for October 2018 to validate the draft risk profile, and to review the workstream scoping and priorities.

Following the second October workshop a paper will be presented to Network Rail's QHSE Integration Group to propose the workstreams including time, cost, industrial relations implications and safety benefits.

Timescale for this stage: 31 January 2019.

Implementation timescales will be determined following this initial stage.