



ORR occupational health programme update

January 2015

Introduction

This quarterly brief updates you on progress with some of the work under [ORR's Occupational Health programme 2014-19](#), to inform discussions on health with ORR inspectors. We have identified key messages for rail duty holders and would welcome [feedback](#).

This issue focuses on:

- Occupational cancer campaign – new ORR and IOSH guidance on diesel fumes
- Pilot training courses for rail managers on health – how to get involved
- Call for rail industry to support Government Health Responsibility Deal pledges

1. No Time to Lose on occupational cancer – new guidance on health risks and control of diesel fumes

ORR actively supports the [‘No Time to Lose’ campaign](#) being run by IOSH to raise awareness of occupational cancers and to help businesses take action. Recent [research](#) carried out for HSE has been important in identifying the scale and main causes of work related cancers. It found that in Great Britain, there are around 13,500 new cases of cancer caused by work every year, and over 8,000 deaths. Although over half these deaths are due to past exposures to asbestos, exposure to other substances commonly found in the rail industry, such as diesel engine exhaust emissions (DEEE) and respirable crystalline silica, as well as exposures to the sun and shift work, make a significant contribution to the total burden of work related cancers. We want rail companies to do

more to prevent occupational cancers, and to better educate their managers and workers, and see the No Time to Lose campaign as a valuable mechanism for doing this.

ORR is encouraging rail companies to sign the [IOSH No Time to Lose pledge](#) to prevent occupational cancers, and to make a start by focusing on diesel engine exhaust emissions (DEEE), which is the initial focus of the IOSH campaign. Diesel engines are in widespread use in the rail industry, with potential for fumes to build up when diesel engines are left running in stations, depots, and work sites in tunnels. Available evidence from sample exposure monitoring in some larger railway stations and depots indicates that DEEE exposures in rail are towards the upper range of typical workplace exposures, supporting the need for a precautionary approach towards DEEE control in our industry. Short term exposures to DEEE can cause irritation of the eyes and lungs, and there is some evidence that it may cause or worsen asthma. Long term exposures to high levels of DEEE can cause serious breathing problems and can increase the risk of lung cancer by up to 40%. [HSE research](#) estimates that in Britain about 650 workers a year die from cancer as a result of being exposed to diesel exhaust fumes at work; over 250 of these are in the land transport sector, which includes road, rail and pipeline transport.

New guidance is now available to help rail employers and employees to better understand the risks from DEEE, what the law requires, and how to ensure adequate control to protect workers. ORR's new [occupational cancers web page](#) signposts a range of useful information, including links to the IOSH No Time to Lose campaign; the HSE cancer burden research; HSE's occupational disease community; and ORR advice on reporting of occupational cancers under RIDDOR 2013.

ORR has also produced revised guidance for ORR inspectors on what action rail employers should take to comply with the law in relation to DEEE. Rail Guidance Document RGD-2014-04 '[Diesel engine exhaust emissions in the railway sector](#)' is on ORR's occupational cancers web page. It should help rail companies to better understand how the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) applies to DEEE as a carcinogen; what a suitable and sufficient COSHH assessment should consider; and the hierarchy of control for preventing and controlling DEEE exposure. [IOSH's free pack on DEEE](#) contains a wide range of practical resources including a factsheet; presentations and toolbox talks for managers and workers; posters, leaflets and pocket cards. These should prove a valuable resource for rail companies and can be downloaded free from IOSH's Time to Lose web page.

Key messages:

- Join ORR and the growing number of leading businesses by pledging your support for the [IOSH No Time to Lose campaign](#) to prevent occupational cancers. Make a start by reviewing your current arrangements for managing risk from exposure to

diesel engine exhaust emissions (DEEE). Use [new ORR](#) and [IOSH guidance](#) and resources on DEEE to help you.

- Does your COSHH assessment for DEEE recognise the current evidence on carcinogenic risk, and follow the precautionary approach to control of suspect carcinogens required under COSHH? Have you considered the need for exposure monitoring in locations where DEEE may accumulate, to confirm that current control measures are adequate? [ORR's revised guidance](#) provides detailed advice on assessing DEEE exposure.
- Do your workers and managers understand the health risks associated with exposure to DEEE, and the control measures required to protect their health? Do they know the signs that might indicate potential for harmful exposures, such as complaints of irritation to eyes and lungs, obvious soot deposits on surfaces; and/or white, blue or black smoke in the workplace? Do you share relevant information on the risk (for example exposure monitoring results,) and required control measures for DEEE with other employers sharing your workplace?
- Do you have an up-to-date action plan to reduce DEEE exposures in the short, medium and longer term? Do your existing controls covers systems of work (for example minimising idling times and revving of engines; and job rotation); provision and regular maintenance of engineering controls (such as exhaust ventilation systems); and training and supervision, particularly of managers?
- Can you prevent or reduce DEEE exposures by moving to alternative or cleaner fuels; by increased use of fuel saving train management systems; electric or compressed air shore supplies; and single (cylinder) bank running? For work in tunnels, can air tools supplied from a compressor sited outside the tunnel be used instead of diesel-driven tools? Can any diesel generators be sited downwind of work groups or outside short tunnel sections?
- Does your equipment purchasing policy support the progressive reduction of DEEE exposures, for example by moving away from diesel plant or specifying equipment which meets the latest emission standards?
- Do your front line managers and supervisors know what you expect from them in terms of managing DEEE exposures? How effectively do they monitor and enforce compliance with operational controls, for example idling time policies at stations and depots?

2. Are your rail managers competent on health? Get involved in planned pilot training courses during 2015

Despite the significant progress seen in managing rail worker health in recent years, we believe that one of the key reasons why the rail industry continues to underperform in this

area is a lack of competence among front line managers on health risk management. Ensuring that your managers and supervisors have the right level of knowledge and skills in assessing and managing occupational health risks should help ensure that you consistently comply with the law, and can also deliver real business benefits. Our web site provides extensive good practice [guidance on rail manager competence on health](#), including what the law requires in this area; assessing training needs for managers; as well as identifying key areas of knowledge on occupational health that most rail managers will need to know.

Under our 2010-14 health programme, ORR worked with the National Examining Body for Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) on the potential development of a NEBOSH certificate on health and wellbeing specifically for the rail industry, which could be taken forward by the industry. We have recently looked at this again, working with NEBOSH and the [National Construction College](#) (a NEBOSH accredited training provider) to review the draft syllabus and develop a tailored three day course on health and wellbeing for the rail industry. RSSB will be invited to provide support with railway specific examples and case studies. Completion of the course would be accredited by the National Construction College (NCC)

We are looking to pilot this shorter, Level 3 course specifically for rail managers during 2015/16, in conjunction with the National Construction College; each course will run with between 6 and 12 delegates, delivered either at NCC training centres, or hosted by individual rail companies. Although details on dates and course fees are to be confirmed we are looking for expressions of interest from employers across the rail industry including infrastructure managers, contractors, train, freight, light rail and larger heritage operators

Key messages:

- Are you complying with the requirements under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to have sufficient competent health and safety assistance (Regulation 7), and to provide employees with sufficient health and safety training (Regulation 13)?
- Are you confident that your front line managers and supervisors have sufficient knowledge and skills in health risk management to do their job? Do they have an appropriate level of understanding of health risk assessment and principles of control, including for example the role of exposure monitoring and health surveillance?
- Are you interested in joining the proposed pilot training courses for rail managers in 2015/16? The intention is that these will be three day courses, delivered by the National Construction College. Please [contact us](#) to register interest as soon as

possible. If you are interested in reviewing the draft syllabus with us to make it even better, please [get in touch](#).

3. Show leadership on health via Government Responsibility Deal pledges

In our [2014-19 health programme](#) we continue to call for stronger, more visible leadership on health, and encourage rail companies to show public commitment to improve worker health by pledging support under the [Department for Health Public Health Responsibility Deal](#). ORR is developing plans for specific pledges and will be signing up to the Responsibility Deal. We have looked at the level of support by rail companies to the Responsibility Deal as part our review of industry progress on health by 2014 (to be published in June this year). By November 2014, 19 rail industry companies had pledged their support; the majority of these signatories were leading construction groups with an interest in rail, and specialist rail contractors. Of the non-contractors, there were only three train operators, plus Network Rail.

The most common [pledges](#) for rail industry companies relate to occupational health provider standards; health and wellbeing reporting; and mental health and wellbeing. All the contractors have committed to the construction and civil engineering industry pledge. We would like to see more rail companies, particularly passenger, freight, and light rail operators, showing public commitment and leadership on health in this way.

Key messages:

- We want to encourage more rail businesses to sign up as partners to the [Government Public Health Responsibility Deal](#) and commit to [pledges](#) to support better worker and public health. We are particularly keen to see more engagement by rail operators across the industry, including passenger, freight, and light rail/tram operators.
- Publically pledging support in this way is purely voluntary, but can help to show your workforce, shareholders/funders, and the wider public, visible leadership and a clear commitment to improving worker health and wellbeing. We are keen to share what action you are taking to deliver the pledge commitments by publishing [good practice health case studies](#) on ORR's health web pages. [Contact us](#) for help with producing and publishing health case studies.



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