New mobile phone briefing pack produced

The use of mobile phones while train driving can lead to accidents. The potential to impair driver performance and cause accidents was tragically highlighted at Chatsworth, California, USA on 12 September 2008 where a collision between two trains occurred. This caused by the driver of one train failing to respond to a stop signal while texting on his mobile phone.

In Britain, mandatory requirements relating to mobile phones are described in the Rule Book and specific guidance on the appropriate use of mobile phones is contained within individual company policies. In addition, the new Rail Industry Standard - RIS-3776-TOM ‘Rail Industry Standard on use of mobile telephonic equipment in driving cabs’ provides a recommendation for the minimum level of restriction on mobile phone use that should be specified in company mobile phone policies.

To support front-line understanding, the cross-industry Operations Focus Group (OFG) sponsored research by RSSB to produce an analysis of train driver attitudes regarding mobile use; and to develop an effective, fit-for-purpose train driver education programme, designed to promote appropriate use of mobiles in line with individual company policies.

The research showed that while most drivers recognised that mobile phone use can have a negative impact, 17% of drivers did not agree that mobile phone use would detract from driving performance.

The programme is on a CD-ROM and includes a hard-hitting PowerPoint resource split into four modules, with video clips and case studies, learning

You can subscribe to Information Bulletin on the RSSB website. http://www.rssb.co.uk/Publications/Lists/infosubform.aspx
The SRM templates, which are produced to help transport operators create a comprehensive risk profile for their operations in support of their safety management activities, aids, educators’ notes, programme manual, posters and stickers. OFG has decided copies will be supplied to trainers, driver managers and managers in RSSB member companies.

A key benefit to industry is for each individual duty holder to be able to avoid the cost and time required to develop bespoke briefings and educational campaigns on this issue, but still have the flexibility to incorporate key messages about their own policies and align with the Rule Book and RIS. In addition, the industry has a richer knowledge base on the issue which includes a deeper consideration of the human factors involved. This will also provide a basis for the industry to potentially extend the campaign to other safety critical roles, and OFG is considering this.

RSSB’s role included facilitating OFG as the research sponsor, project managing the research, and providing technical expertise on railway operations and human factors.

For more details about this research contact Marina Kilcoyne, research manager at marina.kilcoyne@rssb.co.uk.

Contractors get together to support the Safety Management Information System (SMIS) and forthcoming Close Call facility

The Infrastructure Safety Liaison Group (ISLG) has decided to set up a Safety Management Information System (SMIS) User Group for Contractors.

Most Contractor companies have little visibility of the data being entered into SMIS, which can lead to poor data quality, data flow processes and access to data. With the addition of Close Call, a national close call reporting system set to be launched in mid-2011, it has been recognised there would be benefit from having a contractor user group for both of these systems.

The User Group should add value and promote best practice through:

• Influencing and initiating changes to the SMIS and Close Call systems.

• Providing expertise and an expert forum.

• Promoting consensus, enabling rapid communication/consultation thereby reducing lead times for changes.

For more information contact Neil Duggan, SMIS business manager on 020 3142 5478 or email neil.duggan@rssb.co.uk

Railway Group Standards changes
For details of changes to Railway Group Standards view the Latest Updates page on the RGS Online website www.rgsonline.co.uk

Railway Group Standards forthcoming consultations
See http://www.consultation.rssb.co.uk/pdf/Forthcomingconsultations.pdf
Industry Leaders Safety Meeting

The third Industry Safety Meeting was held on 29 September 2010 and the chosen topic was Assurance. The meeting was attended by 37 CEOs and executives of train operators, freight operators, Network Rail, ROSCOs, infrastructure contractors, suppliers, ORR, DfT and RSSB. At the heart of the meeting were four syndicate sessions designed to encourage peer group debate on the scope of assurance, arrangements between companies, role of ORR, alternative models at the challenge of assurance during periods of change.

The syndicates generated a great deal of debate and along with the open forum at the end, came up with some useful findings and conclusions. Some of these were:

• Scope of assurance should cover both internal company self assurance and interface risks between company (eg train operators to Network Rail and vice versa).

• Recognition that current interface risk assurance arrangements between companies are under developed and require more attention.

• There may be an opportunity to explore developments such as the Joint Safety Improvement Planning process between Network Rail and train operators to build cooperation and assurance mechanisms (including measures).

• Assurance arrangements need to address how to identify and follow up concerns of the front line workforce.

• There was also recognition that internal company assurance arrangements need to be reviewed.

• Assurance overlaps particularly in the field of supplier assurance need to be identified, challenged and rationalised.

It was agreed that no one party was responsible for assurance in today’s railway. Instead each company has a responsibility for assuring their own operation and providing assurance to interface partners.

The next meeting will take place on 10 February 2011.

ISLG Occupational Health Workshop

Following the publication of the ORR’s Occupational Health Programme 2010-2014, the Infrastructure Safety Liaison Group (ISLG) – the national safety forum for GB mainline railway contractors – arranged a special workshop to consider how to respond to the challenges contained in the ORR programme.

ISLG members were joined by a number of industry experts on the day – Dr Claire Dickinson (ORR), Valmai Hughes (Network Rail), Sara Addison (Volker Rail) and Ann Mills (RSSB). Following presentations from the experts, attendees broke out into work groups to discuss and debate questions on what can the companies do to improve occupational health and what can ISLG do to help collaborative occupational health management? A number of opportunities were identified including:

• Collate and share existing material with contractors

• Develop and commit to an ‘occupational health strategy’ specifically for contractors

• Develop a metrics framework and data collection processes

• Develop a business case template to assist in the cost benefit analysis of occupational health improvements

• Set up a subgroup to look at specific occupational health risks

• Targeted health promotion and surveillance campaigns at major project sites

• Understanding the impact and consequences of multi-sponsorship

ISLG members plan to review all suggestions at their next steering group meeting in December in order to refine and prioritise these to develop their work plan for 2011.

For more information please contact Catherine Gallagher, programme manager on 020 3142 5374.

Rail industry consultation on 30-year technical strategy

Having the right technology at the right time to support rail’s role in driving sustainable economic growth is key to its success. In response, the cross-industry Technical Strategy Advisory Group (TSAG) is showing leadership by anticipating these needs and securing development and research to enable industry to achieve these goals.

To support this, RSSB is managing an on-line consultation on behalf of TSAG on the development of the next edition of the Rail Technical Strategy, due in 2012. The railway needs an updated technical strategy to support its business objectives and think long term. The state of play is outlined in the consultation document - ‘Shaping the 30-year Rail Technical Strategy’- prepared by RSSB, and introduced by TSAG chair, Steve Yianni, Director of Engineering at Network Rail, and TSAG is encouraging industry and others who can contribute to take part.

At the heart of thinking is the 30-year aspiration, which TSAG has established to guide its work - to halve the cost
of rail operations and its carbon footprint while doubling network capacity and increasing customer satisfaction. These challenges resonate with both the government spending review and the Value for Money review being conducted by Sir Roy McNulty and support the industry’s Planning Ahead process. By setting the bar deliberately high, TSAG wants to inspire ambitious thinking now, to secure a sustainable future and long term value for money.

Crucial to industry’s ability to make the right call at the right time on technology is its ability to undertake research. TSAG has identified five ‘game changers’ which need to be researched and developed now so that decision makers can identify and draw on the appropriate benefits and take technology decisions with a 30-year perspective. The game changers are to:

- Enable innovation, not re-invention
- Establish next generation traffic management
- Optimise energy strategy
- Build in whole system reliability
- Provide smarter data and communications

This perspective was also at the heart of TSAG’s own input to a consultation on franchising by Department for Transport, in October. In a move that demonstrates that the ‘game changers’ have a role in all elements of railway strategy and specification, TSAG has encouraged the government to ensure new franchise arrangements enable strategic technical innovation.

RSSB provides both the R&D capability and the administrative framework for co-operative programmes to industry – including TSAG - to develop the knowledge base to support industry action and decision making across a range of issues, in response to data, information and analysis.

A wide range of industry contacts has been made aware of the consultation via email. The closing date for input to the consultation is 17 December 2010.

‘Shaping the 30-year Rail Technical Strategy’ and all relevant information about the consultation and how respond is available at: www.futurerailway.org or contact

Martin Brennan, technical strategy manager by email tsagconsultation2010@rssb.co.uk

Rail industry forging stronger links with academia in new research partnership

The rail industry is developing new ways to get more all-round value out of research by enhancing the existing collaboration with universities and other academic research organisations. The new academic year sees the Rail Research UK Association (RRUK-A) - a partnership between the British rail industry and UK universities – open for membership.

RRUK-A aims to bring together those who can use and fund railway research with those who do it. It will provide a focus for research institutions who undertake R&D that could be of benefit to the railways and for the railway industry to access academic research capabilities. It will provide a forum for targeted knowledge exchange between universities and the industry, including the organisation of focussed workshops and seminars, as well as wider networking opportunities.

RSSB is funding this new partnership in its role of managing research on behalf of the rail industry.

RSSB’s Director of Policy, Research and Risk, Anson Jack, who will be the co-chairman of the new association, described the benefits of investing in research in the current economic climate: ‘The overall case for research is compelling but the industry wants to make sure it is exploiting appropriate funding sources for the benefit of its long term objectives.

The benefit to industry of having its own R&D programme is that the work will provides both value-for-money and contributes to the industry’s objectives of better business performance and cutting out unnecessary cost.

‘To secure this value, research relies on an initial outlay of funding to do the work, so some of the focus has to be on maximising the benefit we get out of that outlay - and RRUK-A will support this aim. The academic science base has much to offer towards finding solutions to meet the country’s needs in a way that can deliver long term growth for the economy.’

The cross-industry R&D programme develops the knowledge base to support industry action and decision making across a range of issues, in response to data, information and analysis. RSSB delivers the programme under one roof, saving industry and government effort and money. The funding to support RRUK-A has already been set aside by RSSB for at least three years from this Autumn.

All UK research institutes eligible for Research Council funding have been invited to become members and individual researchers can be registered through their own institution’s membership. For further details on membership, go to www.rruka.org.uk.

For more details about RRUK-A membership, contact the secretariat: Tony Leyland, Southampton University at secretariat@rruka.org.uk, and for matters of rail industry engagement: Tanya McCallum, RSSB at rruka@rssb.co.uk
New Guidance Note on Train Rooftop Antenna Positioning

The correct positioning and installation of train rooftop antennas is key to the successful operation of radio and wireless communication systems both for on-board and train to shore. Prior to this guidance note there was very limited unclear and not easily obtainable information on antenna positioning and fitment. This can lead to poor reception and speech quality, together with an unnecessary number of antennas, contributing to additional interference of existing communicating systems and unnecessary cost.

In response, the rail industry, represented by the Vehicle/Train Control and Communications System Interface Committee (V/TC &CS SIC), asked RSSB to commission research project T739: Train Rooftop Antenna Positioning – Issues Study. The objective was to explore potential good practice solutions to provide safe and effective optimisation of the train antenna design and installation practices.

The Guidance Note GK/GN0602 includes guidance on the selection of the antennas, their mounting locations and arrangements, as well as information concerning the associated radio frequency components. It sets out good practice on the specification, implementation and installation of radio antennas on the roofs of trains. The GN provides recommended antenna separation distances between various system types; e.g. GSM-R, Wi-Fi etc. and an antenna positioning methodology. A main topic addressed within the GN is the positioning of antennas taking into account obstructions e.g. air-conditioning unit, pantographs etc, within the roof top environment.

Antenna arrangement on a Class 444 and the general roof top environment

The benefit to the industry is an enhanced knowledge base on fitment of train communication systems which all members can access, reducing the need for bespoke solutions. One of the practical engineering benefits that can be brought about is the reduction of additional drilled holes in the rooftop of rolling stock, through the design of new wireless systems sharing a single antenna. The Guidance Note can be accessed from RGS Online – www.rgsonline.co.uk, when published in the December 2010 catalogue and the research can be downloaded from the RSSB website www.rssb.co.uk

OPE TSI - Harmonisation of freight train rear end indicators

Throughout Europe there are currently 19 different ways of marking or indicating the rear end of trains. Some countries use reflective plates, whilst others use red lamps.

The European Railway Agency (ERA) is currently conducting a study into the feasibility of widening the use of reflective plates to indicate the rear of freight trains, thereby replacing existing red tail lamps. RSSB has been asked to assist in one of the areas of this study by obtaining the views of UK freight train drivers about the occasions they enter a goods loop under permissive working regulations.

This questionnaire is one of many steps that will determine the feasibility of replacing tail lamps with reflective plates.

This questionnaire has two sections:

1) Driving techniques, influences and frequencies of entering a goods loop and working under permissive conditions

2) Your opinions on the above subject

This first step of the project will conclude at the end of March 2011 and the results will be sent to ERA for analysis. These will be considered alongside comments from drivers in other European countries.

If you require more information or wish to participate either contact your local manager or David Reed, operations specialist at david.reed@rssb.co.uk
Vehicle/Track Systems Interface Committee
Annual Seminar ~ ‘Taking theory into practice’

The Vehicle/Track Systems Interface Committee (V/T SIC) held their annual one-day seminar at RSSB offices on 20 October 2010.

Tim Gilbert, Engineering Director of Porterbrook Leasing Company and Deputy Chairman of V/T SIC, opened the seminar with an introduction to V/T SIC indicating the work that has been undertaken and the challenges faced in implementing some of the developments. Mark Burstow, Network Rail, elaborated on the knowledge that has been learnt from the work undertaken by V/T SIC and provided examples of where improvements have been introduced. An example of lowering system costs, from the train operators perspective, was given by Christian Roth, South West Trains, where he indicated the system benefits can be gained from the HALL axle box pivot bush. However, the rail industry now faces the challenge to instigate incentives for the implementation of technologies that will provide system improvements.

Updates were also presented on several current wheel/rail interaction projects.

V/T SIC had commissioned the best practice hand-book as a means of bringing together state of the art knowledge from experts within the wheel/rail interface and associated disciplines and disseminates that knowledge and know-how on good practice in managing the wheel/rail interface. This interface is critical in the safe and efficient operation of railways of all types since it experiences high loads in demanding environmental conditions. Copies of the handbook can be ordered from A&N Harris and all seminar presentations can be accessed on the RSSB website.

RSSB would like to wish everyone a Happy Christmas in 2010 and good wishes for the New Year and to say that, as in previous years, we will be making a donation to charity instead of sending industry Christmas cards.

Our charity in 2010 will be the Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity and the donation will help to provide world-class care for its young patients and their families, and to pioneer new treatments for childhood illnesses.