Being aware of the risks around you

We often think we know about safety risks. These risks can be present in our work environments, whether this is on a work site, driving a vehicle, on the platform, or shunting a train around a depot. That doesn’t mean, however, that we are always aware of every risk which could be the source of an injury. Sometimes, we can ignore the risks around us because we have become overfamiliar with them.

UNDERSTANDING OF RISK

Test your knowledge and understanding of risk in this quick quiz designed to challenge some commonly held perceptions. See how many you can get right (answers provided on p3).

1. What is the largest cause of workforce risk on the railway?
   - electric shocks
   - falling from a height
   - slips, trips and falls
   - struck or crushed by a train
   - assault

2. What is the largest contributor of risk to incidents away from the track?
   - platforms
   - stairs
   - ladders
   - station concourses
   - mess room kitchens

3. Which job is most at risk of being injured in the course of their duties?
   - Infrastructure Workers
   - Cleaners
   - Office workers
   - Drivers/Shunters
   - Engineering Staff

4. What are the chances of a Passenger Train Driver having a fatal accident in a given year?
   - 1 in 5,000
   - 1 in 10,000
   - 1 in 17,000
   - 1 in 28,000
   - 1 in 50,000

5. In attacks on rail staff, what is the biggest contributor?
   - service delays
   - drugs and alcohol
   - ticket disputes
   - requests to stop smoking
   - aggravated theft or vandalism

6. What is most reported unsafe road driving behaviour to the close call system?
   - parking contraventions
   - erratic driving
   - driving whilst on a mobile phone
   - speeding
   - vehicle collisions
Some of the answers to our quiz may have surprised you.

For example, slips, trips, and falls contribute 26 per cent of workforce risk in terms of injuries. Train accidents contribute just 4 per cent.

A train accident is of course potentially far more catastrophic, but you’re actually far more likely to suffer harm from an everyday slip, trip or fall incident.

We tend to confuse severity of an incident with its likelihood, but they are two very different things.

When it comes to the biggest contributor to off-track incidents, it’s not platforms or ladders but stairs! These account for a quarter of all workforce incidents.

“Sometimes, we can ignore the risks around us because we have become overfamiliar with them.”

Most people would probably say Infrastructure Workers are most at risk of injury on the railway, but Shunters are actually the ones most at risk, with a 1 in 11,000 risk of a fatality in a given year.

In the grand scheme of things that’s still very, very low - but it is noticeably higher than for other job types. It falls to 1 in 14,000 for On-Track Plant Drivers, and Track Workers are in third place with a figure closer to 1 in 15,000. For Passenger Train Drivers, the risk falls further to 1 in 28,000.

Did you think that drugs and alcohol were the main reason for attacks on rail staff? They lead to just 17 per cent of attacks on the workforce, which is still a significant amount.

By far the biggest contributor to attacks on rail staff are ticket disputes where someone ‘loses their rag’.

The people most likely to get verbal or physical abuse from passengers and members of the public are the staff who deal with them directly, particularly Revenue Inspectors and Station Staff. In times of service disruption, they are particularly likely to face such abuse.

Finally, in the area of reporting, the Close Call system logged 523 cases of unsafe road driver behaviours last year.

You might imagine that speeding would attract far more attention than an inability to park safely, but that’s not the case. There were more than twice as many reports about parking contraventions (164) than there were about speeding (75).

Having said this, however, we should note that the potential consequences of speeding are far more severe than the consequences from parking contraventions.

Reporting helps address safety risks

It can be easy to forget that the risks of becoming injured are often present in our everyday working environments.

This serves as a clear reminder that the reporting of associated hazards really matters if we want to improve on our safety record.

If we are serious about addressing these risks, we should welcome reports of all descriptions – whether they are viewed as potentially life threatening or not. This applies as much to internal reporting and Close Call as it does to the alternative service we provide here at CIRAS.
Signal SK6554 obscured by overgrown vegetation

Concerns were reported to CIRAS about Drivers not being able to see the signal.

THE CONCERN...

A reporter has raised concerns that signal SK6554 on the Kincardine to Stirling route is completely obscured by trees.

It is reported that Drivers cannot see the signal on approach until they are past the point where the automatic warning system magnets are positioned.

The trees growing around the signal have resulted in it being obscured for several months, and it seems that no attempts have been made to remove the vegetation.

There are concerns that if Drivers cannot clearly see the signal on approach, this could lead to a signal passed at danger.

The reporter would like Network Rail to:

- Clarify whether a maintenance schedule for removing vegetation is in place
- Consider removing the vegetation surrounding signal SK6554

THE RESPONSE...

Network Rail has a vegetation management regime in place.

Since April 2014, more than 29,000 square yards of vegetation have been removed in the Edinburgh maintenance delivery unit area. A further 20,000 square yards planned for removal during the rest of the year.

Prioritisation of the sites where vegetation is removed is done on a risk basis.

Network Rail can now confirm that the vegetation surrounding SK6554 has been removed. Please see photos included for confirmation.

Overgrown vegetation can be reported through the Signaller or via the Close Call hotline for investigation and removal if it is thought that the vegetation poses an immediate risk.

ACTIONS TAKEN

Network Rail

- Clarified the vegetation clearing regime for Edinburgh DU
- Removed the vegetation around signal SK6554
Reporter Feedback

“I was very happy with Network Rail’s response. This issue could still have been ongoing if CIRAS hadn’t been involved.”

CIRAS COMMENT

This report is a good example of the benefits CIRAS bring in providing another line of defence to the safety systems deployed by Network Rail and a Train Operating Company.

No previous events had been logged in the railway industry’s Safety Management Information System for reporting incidents. Close Call is used predominantly by Network Rail and its contractors, so you would not normally expect to find a report made by a Driver logged there either.

On this occasion, internal routes of reporting did not result in the obscured signal being quickly dealt with. The CIRAS report brought this to the attention of Network Rail, who then took appropriate action and cleared the overgrown vegetation.

CIRAS

COMMENT

© Network Rail

AFTER

© Network Rail

HOW DID WE DO?

Q1 How happy are you that the concern has been addressed? 7
Q2 How well was the CIRAS process explained? 7
Q3 How well was the report summarised? 7
Q4 How happy are you overall with the CIRAS service? 7
Q5 How happy are you with the time taken to get a response? 7
Q6 How happy are you with the company’s response? 7

RATING SCALE

1 Very dissatisfied
2 Mostly dissatisfied
3 Somewhat dissatisfied
4 Neither Satisfied nor dissatisfied
5 Somewhat Satisfied
6 Mostly Satisfied
7 Very Satisfied
Harsco Maintenance Staff booking on by text message

Concerns have been raised about Maintenance Staff not having verbal or face-to-face contact with the company.

Previously, staff had to call control and book on over the telephone in order to confirm they were fit for duty. Now they are able to book on by text message.

As Maintenance Staff work alone, they may not have any contact with the company for days when they are booking on by text message.

The reporter would like Harsco to:

- Clarify the booking on procedure
- Comment on the change in procedure
- Consider reverting back to staff booking on by telephone

THE RESPONSE...

HARSOC

Harsco Rail Maintenance Staff historically contacted Harsco Rail Control Centre to book on/off for duty by telephone.

Some staff had been booking on by text message. This was raised as a concern by the Maintenance Staff Safety Representative at the beginning of June 2014. The Head of Environment and Safety immediately started to investigate the process for its sufficiency.

Having reviewed the Safety Critical Staff Booking On / Off Duty procedure (PRO/M/O/010), Harsco can confirm that the procedure presently states that safety critical staff should book on and off duty through Harsco Control.

The decision has been taken that all safety workers shall book on and off for duty by telephone call. However, Harsco recognises that there will be instances when there is a high volume of calls to Harsco Rail Control Centre.

In such instances, it may not be possible to have actual voice communication with a member of Control Centre staff, and the member of staff booking on or off for duty should leave a voice message.

Harsco wishes to reiterate that safety issues raised by staff are always taken seriously. The
company’s commitment to safety is paramount, and is discussed regularly at all relevant levels with impartiality.

Safety and risk management will always take priority over performance.

However, the procedure does not state by what method (i.e. via telephone call or text message). Furthermore, there were other points which required clarification.

Discussions have been facilitated to review the sufficiency of booking on and off for duty by text message. It has been agreed that a verbal communication would be a more appropriate way for maintenance staff to book on and off for duty.

There are other safety critical workers who book on or off for duty via a telephone call to Hasco Control. This is in compliance with the booking on/off for duty procedure.

The procedure has been reviewed, and amendments have been made to afford additional clarification. This will ensure a consistent approach for all safety critical workers booking on/off for duty across the company.

Other media and technologies are also being explored to try to continually improve the process. The revised procedure is now live and has been briefed out to all safety critical workers.

** HOW DID WE DO? **

| Q1 | How happy are you that the concern has been addressed? | 7 |
| Q2 | How well was the CIRAS process explained? | 7 |
| Q3 | How well was the report summarised? | 7 |
| Q4 | How happy are you overall with the CIRAS service? | 7 |
| Q5 | How happy are you with the time taken to get a response? | 7 |
| Q6 | How happy are you with the company’s response? | 6 |

** RATING SCALE **

1. Very dissatisfied
2. Mostly dissatisfied
3. Somewhat dissatisfied
4. Neither Satisfied nor dissatisfied
5. Somewhat Satisfied
6. Mostly Satisfied
7. Very Satisfied

** ACTIONS TAKEN **

** HARSCO **

- Reviewed the Safety Critical Staff Booking On/Off Duty procedure
- Clarified that all safety critical workers should book on and off for duty by a telephone call to Hasco Control
- Revised procedure will be augmented to a brief and cascaded out to all safety critical workers for clarification
Large gap between the train and platform at Baker Street

Concerns were raised about the potential for passengers to fall between the train and the platform.

**THE CONCERN...**

This affects the platforms used by the northbound Metropolitan line.

The reporter believes that the size of the gap has increased as a result of the introduction of the new S stock trains. The risk of someone falling between the train and the platform is felt by the reporter to be increased due to the curvature of the platforms.

The reporter recognises that some mitigation measures have been implemented, but believes that more could be done to manage the risk.

**MITIGATING MEASURES**

As a result of the increased gaps and increase in incidents, additional mitigation measures have already been implemented by London Underground. These include:

- Installing tactile paving at the platform edge
- Improvements to ‘mind the gap’ markings
- Under-platform lighting
- Hazard warnings on the floors at doors affected
- Flooring at the bottom of the stairs made slip resistant
- A barrier installed on platform four to prevent customers rushing to board the train where the gap is larger
- Mind the gap stickers on affected train doors
- Audio and visual announcements
- Customer communication campaigns
- Train indicator screens moved to reduce the likelihood of customers falling down the gap when looking at screens whilst walking to board trains
- Auto door close cut out on platforms one and four to reduce the likelihood of customers rushing for trains
- Blue light trial to draw customers’ attention to the gap (platform one)

The reporter would like London Underground to:

- Clarify if the size of the gap is compliant with London Underground standards
- Clarify if any other mitigation measures or platform alterations are planned to reduce the size of the gap
- Clarify if there has been an increase in the number of platform-train-interface incidents regarding this issue since the introduction of the S stock trains
The introduction of S stock has had significant benefits for the Metropolitan line, including increased safety, reliability, capacity and improved customer environment.

The S stock was specified with a lower floor height to achieve level access at the Platform-Train Interface (PTI) to benefit all customers, especially those who are mobility impaired.

The design of the S stock is narrower at floor level than the previous A stock was, so that it fits the existing platform profile.

As a result of this, the S stock has a smaller vertical step, and at 90% of stations, a smaller diagonal step. This reduces trip hazards at the PTI.

The lower floor has been designed to meet the vertical and horizontal measures of LU’s standard platforms. This is not significant at most locations; however, at some curved platforms such as Baker Street, gaps are larger.

There has been an increase in the number of ‘fall down the gap’ incidents at Baker Street since the introduction of the S stock. Platform two has seen the highest numbers of incidents occurring.

The platforms are staffed during times when the majority of incidents occur. The staff make announcements to customers and provide a response in the event of an incident occurring.

These mitigation measures have more recently been applied to platform two. The blue light trial has been extended to this platform, and work has been done to move nosing stones on the platform to reduce the gap between the train and the platform.

Incident levels on platform one are significantly lower and have reduced further since the modification to stop the auto door close functioning on this platform.

PTI incidents are continually monitored at the Metropolitan line PTI Group and ‘Go, Look, Sees’ are undertaken for all falls between the train and the platform to ensure that causes of incidents are identified and further improvement actions undertaken as necessary.

LU Standards have to accommodate a large variance of platforms, from new build, which should be straight and level, to older platforms which were built on curves. LU Standards recognise this but specify other safety measures, such as under-platform lighting, where there are large gaps.

There is under-platform lighting at Baker Street, and numerous additional mitigation measures that have been or are planned to be introduced to help manage the risk at the PTI at this location.

**THE RESPONSE...**

**LONDON UNDERGROUND**

The introduction of S stock has had significant benefits for the Metropolitan line, including increased safety, reliability, capacity and improved customer environment.

The S stock was specified with a lower floor height to achieve level access at the Platform-Train Interface (PTI) to benefit all customers, especially those who are mobility impaired.

The design of the S stock is narrower at floor level than the previous A stock was, so that it fits the existing platform profile.

As a result of this, the S stock has a smaller vertical step, and at 90% of stations, a smaller diagonal step. This reduces trip hazards at the PTI.

The lower floor has been designed to meet the vertical and horizontal measures of LU’s standard platforms. This is not significant at most locations; however, at some curved platforms such as Baker Street, gaps are larger.

There has been an increase in the number of ‘fall down the gap’ incidents at Baker Street since the introduction of the S stock. Platform two has seen the highest numbers of incidents occurring.

The platforms are staffed during times when the majority of incidents occur. The staff make announcements to customers and provide a response in the event of an incident occurring.

These mitigation measures have more recently been applied to platform two. The blue light trial has been extended to this platform, and work has been done to move nosing stones on the platform to reduce the gap between the train and the platform.

Incident levels on platform one are significantly lower and have reduced further since the modification to stop the auto door close functioning on this platform.

PTI incidents are continually monitored at the Metropolitan line PTI Group and ‘Go, Look, Sees’ are undertaken for all falls between the train and the platform to ensure that causes of incidents are identified and further improvement actions undertaken as necessary.

LU Standards have to accommodate a large variance of platforms, from new build, which should be straight and level, to older platforms which were built on curves. LU Standards recognise this but specify other safety measures, such as under-platform lighting, where there are large gaps.

There is under-platform lighting at Baker Street, and numerous additional mitigation measures that have been or are planned to be introduced to help manage the risk at the PTI at this location.

**STATION & PLATFORM**

- Clarified the need for LU Standards to take into account different types of platforms
- Clarified the additional mitigation measures put in place in order to reduce PTI incidents at this location (see box)
Safety glasses considered ‘not practical’ for staff wearing spectacles

There are concerns over the build-up of condensation between spectacles and Network Rail issued safety glasses.

**THE CONCERN...**

A reporter has raised concerns to CIRAS about the mandatory safety glasses provided to staff in Brighton maintenance depot. It is reported that these are not practical for staff who need to wear spectacles.

It is reported that staff who wear spectacles in order to have clear vision are having to wear the mandatory safety glasses over the top of their own spectacles. At times, this causes a build-up of condensation between the two lenses, meaning staff are unable to see clearly.

The reporter states that staff are removing the safety glasses when this occurs, but there is concern that this puts them at risk of injury or eye damage.

It is felt that staff who wear spectacles should be provided with modified safety glasses, so that they can act as spectacles for the individual’s specific sight requirements whilst also providing protection.

**THE RESPONSE...**

**NETWORK RAIL**

Safety glasses should be worn at all times when working within depots or on the operational infrastructure within the Brighton delivery unit area.

A Team Leader is permitted to determine that safety glasses are not required for a specific activity, provided that they have conducted a risk assessment and documented the reasons why safety glasses are not required.

Prescription safety glasses are available to all employees working for Brighton delivery unit.

The procedure for ordering prescription safety glasses will be re-briefed as part of our next four-weekly safety cascade.

Further details can be found in NR/HR/POL/011 ‘Safety Prescription Spectacles Policy’ and NR/HR/POL/005 ‘Eyecare Policy and Procedure’.

**ACTIONS TAKEN**

**NETWORK RAIL**

- Clarified when safety glasses need to be worn
- Clarified the procedure for ordering prescription safety glasses.

**The reporter would like Network Rail to:**

- Clarify if safety glasses must be worn at all times by staff in the depot
- Consider providing staff with modified safety glasses
Do you have any **concerns** about safety?  
Have you tried internal reporting channels, or don’t feel that you can?

If so, please provide your contact details in the space below. Any information you provide will be treated as confidential.

We ask you to provide your name and contact details so that a CIRAS Reporting Analyst can get in touch to discuss your report. Once your report is processed, your report form will be destroyed.

**CIRAS will never reveal your personal information to anyone!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Job title:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home phone no:</th>
<th>Company:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mobile phone no:</th>
<th>Home address:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Optional**

If you would like to briefly describe your concern, please do so in the space provided below:

__________________________
__________________________
__________________________

*There are other ways of contacting us if you prefer. You can call us, text us, or fill out a form online. All our details are at the bottom of the page.*

**What happens next?**

- A member of the CIRAS team will get in touch and discuss your health and safety concerns.
- A written report will be prepared on your behalf.
- We will make sure the report does not contain ANY information that can identify YOU.
- We then send the report to the relevant company for a response.
- Once we receive the company response we will then provide you with a copy.
Following the success of last year’s Rail Safety Summit, we are delighted to announce that our sixth event is now expanded to two days, and will be held on Thursday 30th April and Friday 1st May at the Royal College of Physicians, London.

The Rail Safety Summit has become THE conference for rail safety executives, infrastructure owners, train operators, rail stakeholders and training professionals, with leading figures from the rail safety, security, risk assessment and training professions all in attendance.

An Advisory Board has been developed for the 2015 Safety Summit. This esteemed group of people come from all areas of the Rail Industry and are best placed to know what the current burning questions in the industry are that need to be answered.

Day 1: A meeting of rail safety minds
How do we continue to make sense of safety?

Day 2: CIRAS - Confidential Reporting for Safety
Are we addressing the concerns of the workforce?

Book your tickets now at www.railsafetysummit.com