

August update



Rail Safety & Standards Board

This monthly e-newsletter aims to inform readers on community safety issues, and is produced by the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB), in support of the rail industry's efforts to address crime that impacts on rail related safety risk.

The areas of focus include misuse of level crossings, abuse of rail staff and passengers, trespass (including suicide), vandalism and graffiti.

If you would like to contribute to, or simply comment on this e-newsletter, please contact community.safety@rssb.co.uk or 020 7904 7674 - your continued interest is needed in order to ensure that information is shared and lessons are learned by everyone working in community safety.

Gaynor Anderson, Editor

► The RSSB community safety e-newsletter – ‘Update’ – is evolving, thanks to its readers

As many of you will know, RSSB commissioned a readership survey of this e-newsletter, in order to help set the direction for its future development and improvement.

Firstly – Many thanks to everyone that participated!

The findings have shown that the publication brings issues to readers' attention that they may otherwise have been unaware of, that many had taken direct action as a result of reading it, and that it is an important publication that should continue to be produced. It gave us a good insight into the different needs of the different types of readers, and made it clear that the e-newsletter has done well to meet the challenge of catering for a variety of roles in the past.

Secondly – Your feedback in the future will be even more important!

Now that ‘Update’ has a new editorial team, you will inevitably find some changes to the format and content of this e-newsletter. With your input we can ensure that this publication continues to meet your needs.

The survey also provided some areas for consideration; we would be interested in your thoughts and suggestions, specifically on the following:

- Local Government and Network Rail were identified as groups that had a variable interest in the content; consider how it could be improved and focused better towards



updateupdateupdateupdateupdateup

these two key audiences.

- International respondents were avid readers though had different needs from most; consider the use of online communities and dedicated sections for different audiences.
- Explain to readers what the news and initiatives 'means for them'.
- Make better use of internet and design technology to communicate more effectively.

Contact community.safety@rssb.co.uk or call Gaynor Anderson on 020 7904 7674 – thank-you!

▶ BTP gets airborne

Officers from British Transport Police have teamed up with Network Rail this summer to patrol from the skies in a bid to tackle crime on the railway.

Police Officers from BTP, known as 'air observers', will accompany pilots in the Network Rail helicopter on flights throughout the North West to act as 'spotters' specifically to target line of route offences such as stone-throwing, trespassing and vandalism. The helicopter, used for track maintenance, is equipped with powerful cameras that can assist officers on the ground in targeting areas where historically there have been a number of incidents. Seven officers from BTP are currently trained as air observers throughout the country.

▶ Preventing suicides at stations

Suicides at stations average 70 per year. This is an emotive area involving personal tragedy for the family of the victims and trauma and distress to those involved in the aftermath and disruption to the operation of the railway.

The former Rail Fatality Management Group (disbanded in April 2006) sponsored a series of visits to station operators by RSSB and the Samaritans. During these visits, the issues were discussed and various counter measures examined. As a result some station operators are planning to display Samaritans posters, offer direct phone links to the Samaritans and send staff on sessions with the Samaritans to enable them to spot potential suicide victims before an incident by observing their behaviour. This may allow simple intervention that could deter them from going through with their plan.

An information pack for station operators will be available in October from RSSB and the



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Samaritans. For more details contact Maurice Wilsdon at maurice.wilsdon@rssb.co.uk

► More Police Community Support Officers

First Capital Connect has invested over £1million with a further £905,000 per year in 24 Police Community Support Officers and five Police Officers to help the train operator enhance the safety and security of their customers and work with the revenue protection teams on specifically targeted operations. The new Officers will be seen on the network this autumn.

A similar initiative supported by the Welsh Assembly, Arriva Trains Wales and British Transport Police will see 21 Police Community Support Officers serving the rail network in Wales.

► Spat!

A female passenger who spat in the face of a member of First TransPennine Express staff at Dewsbury station when challenged for using a confiscated railcard is now in jail.

The employee took a sample of the spit and through DNA testing the passenger was tracked down by her Metro Card.

Spittle is collected on a swab (like a Q-tip), sealed and a statement is taken from the member of staff (for the evidence chain). The sample is then submitted by BTP for comparison against the National DNA database

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/science-research/using-science/dna-database/?version=1

If there is a match that is followed up, if there isn't the sample remains on the database. If someone's DNA profile is subsequently added, it is automatically checked against these outstanding crime scene samples, and if a match occurs, you then have your suspect. So in theory you could get prosecuted in 20 years time for a spitting today!

► Portable Scanners Stop Knife Carrying on Railway

Operation Shield launched in February 2006 (and featured in May's Update) has so far seen around 30,000 people walk through portable scanners – similar to those seen at airports. Police have made 77 arrests for weapon possession, seized 202 weapons, made 62 drug arrests and a further 56 arrests for other matters such as public order. Throughout the country the use of scanners has been welcomed by passengers who



updateupdateupdateupdateupdateup

view it as a positive step towards making the railways an even safer way to travel. Welcoming the initiative in South Wales recently Gwilym Bowen, Security Manager at Arriva Trains Wales commented 'This operation sends out a strong message that knife carrying and anti social behaviour will not be tolerated on our train services'.

► **Unloved stations need carers**

RSSB is considering best practice in managing station adoption schemes and will be releasing a good practice guide based on the findings of the research during winter 2006/2007.

Station adoption is a way of bringing stations back into the heart of the community and thus encourages greater use of public transport. The research will consider case studies of what has worked and what has not both in urban and rural areas in Britain and Abroad

Passenger Focus is right behind the research and believes that sharing best practice brings benefits. Getting passengers and local communities to take ownership of a part of their local environment will restore pride in the railway.

Schemes can involve community use of empty buildings, gardening and floral displays, observation and notification of maintenance requirements and improved links with communities.

For further information on the research please contact Paul McGuire at RSSB
paul.mcguire@rssb.co.uk

► **Westminster Briefing**

Building Safer Communities Through Partnership is the title of a one-day conference taking place on Tuesday, 5 December 2006. The aim is to provide a forum for practitioners, local policy makers and civil servants to debate key issues with leading figures from within Westminster, Whitehall and Local Government.

The sessions will cover:

- Crime, Disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour
- Vandalism and Other Forms of Criminal Damage
- Poverty, Social Exclusion and Neighbourhood Renewal
- Designing Out Crime

For more details contact Marc Davis at marc.davis@westminster-briefing.com



updateupdateupdateupdateupdateup

► S W e R V e

Stop Workplace Related Violence

The Rail Personal Security Group (RPSG) has produced a new educational package called SWeRVe (Stop Workplace Related Violence) to help rail companies train their staff to manage potential conflicts more effectively.

The SWeRVe package includes a DVD featuring hard-hitting videos and a PowerPoint presentation for trainers to use on conflict management courses for front line staff who may have to face difficult situations with members of the public.

The package will be launched to the industry on 27 September.

The DVD consists of 6 episodes showing typical scenarios that can occur and escalate out of control into a threatening or abusive situation, or even end in violence, if not handled sensitively. The following scenarios are covered:

- Passenger on train with wrong ticket
- Passenger at gateline / barrier as the train is leaving
- Business passengers at a station become irate due to late running of train
- Antisocial behaviour on train
- Rowdy football fans

Each episode is repeated with hints on how the situation could have been better managed. The videos are intended to be shown as part of a conflict management course during which trainers will use the PowerPoint presentation. This will facilitate group discussion between each episode, to explore the experiences of those on the course and equip them with skills to help them when they face similar situations.

For more information contact Alan Davies at RSSB, alan.davies@rssb.co.uk

If you would like to share experiences of good practice in countering workplace related violence visit the Health and Safety Executive web community site at <http://webcommunities.hse.gov.uk/inovem/inovem.ti/workrelatedviolence/grouphome>

► Reading Mile Clean-Up

Network Rail sees the visual appearance of the railway as a vital part of its responsibility. The Company is undertaking an £8million national initiative to clean up the network.



updateupdateupdateupdateupdateup

In Reading, the biggest problem was graffiti, litter and fly-tipping and the solution adopted was zero-tolerance. Starting with total clearance of the area including vegetation cutbacks, graffiti removal and scrap disposal to give a clean palette. Staff from across the company joined a litter-pick day to collect everything within a designated mile zone.

Since the clean-up there have been two re-attacks of graffiti and the tags have been quickly defaced or removed. This means the vandal's work is neither on show for very long or worth the risk of trespassing.

► **No Messin'**

Len Porter, Chief Executive at RSSB – and chair of the Community Safety Steering Group, took a trip back to his childhood in the North East when he visited Stockton-on Tees to see Network Rail's No Messin' Campaign in action.

The liaison between Network Rail, British Transport Police and the local authority resulted in a successful event that focussed on young people 10 – 16 years of age and offering them a range of activities to encourage links with the local community. The activities included football, boxing, basketball, cricket, climbing and being a DJ.

The two-day event in August attracted around 2,000 people and demonstrated the commitment and enthusiasm of everyone working together to keep young people informed of the dangers of trespass and vandalism on the railways while giving them a challenge and new skill.

A full round-up of the No Messin' campaign will be in the next issue of Update.

► **Railway crime down 3.1%**

British Transport Police published its Annual Report this week showing that BTP achieved all 11 of its operational objectives, including a 16% reduction in thefts of passengers' property, and that overall crime on Britain's railways fell by 3.1% (as of 20 July 2006).

The Department for Transport's review of BTP announced last month that we are an effective organisation and that a specialist national police force for the railways is the best way of ensuring passenger and staff safety.

For more details visit www.btp.police.uk/publications.htm#annualreport