

# upfront

## health & safety news

### Proposed New Radio Failure Procedure OSN 118 Unsafe

As briefly mentioned in last month's Upfront Safety News, management are hell bent on introducing a new procedure to deal with radio failures. We currently have two procedures for dealing with radio failures: the localised radio system failure and train radio system failure. A new third procedure for radio failures covering larger areas would see trains running in passenger service with no direct communication with the controller. Your Safety Reps have challenged this proposal at every level of the machinery.

The Rule Book team who gave us such nuggets as reversing blind and taking sick passengers into sidings have managed to come up with pure comedy gold this time round.

The new procedure would see all communications between the train operator and service control relayed via the station supervisor. The controller would contact the SS, who would then relay the message to the driver via their hand-held portable radio.

This degraded method of communication is an absolute non-starter from the THSC's perspective.

There would be no recording of the messages passed. The SS would be responsible for logging

all messages passed and received. There would be no recall facility should something go badly wrong.



#### Key issues:

- The Chinese whispers effect where-by, when relaying messages via a third party, incorrect messages are passed to the driver. LU would argue that third party messages already happen in the process used in Rule Book 7, 23.3 from the platform based hand-signal person. The crucial difference with this additional rule is that trains will be running in passenger service and not empty through the affected section.
- This procedure would lead to delays in relaying code amber messages. Again, it already does in the current procedures we use but we are not in passenger service.
- The additional rule is confusing and relies on too many different factors like availability of station staff etc... There is scope for the process to be applied incorrectly or inappropriately and go horribly wrong.

Given that the type of radio failure this process would be used for is very rare it is hard to see why we need the change at all (It has been estimated by the Connect team that this is a one in 18 year failure possibility).

A previous Managing Director of LU, Tim O'Toole, in the aftermath of the 7/7 bombings, and after much debate and consideration, came to the conclusion that it was unsafe to run trains with no radio. We agreed with him then and we agree with him now.

**118 118, we've got their number - you should have ours. Join today [www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/signup](http://www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/signup) or ring 0800 376 3706**

## Health & Safety Council reps:

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The 'upfront' logo features the word 'upfront' in a large, white, sans-serif font. The 'u' and 'p' are lowercase, while 'front' is uppercase. The letters are slightly shadowed, giving them a 3D appearance as if they are floating above a dark, reflective surface. In the background, there is a faint image of a train and some industrial structures.

health & safety news

## Training Issues Discussed At Joint Working Party

One of the regular meetings that your Train's Health Council (THSC) Reps attend is the Competence Management Joint Working Party (CMJWP). This meeting deals with all aspects of training and other issues related to our job requirements.

Some of the ongoing issues currently under discussion are:

- **Piloting of Trains:** Concerns have been raised in some locations about which members of staff are able to pilot trains when required. Rulebook 6 2.6 says that all pilots must be competent and fully licensed. It was found that with the introduction of new operating systems such as TBTC on the Northern line staff that may have been competent to carry out this role previously would no longer be competent to do so. Management informed us that in order for staff to be competent to pilot drivers over an unfamiliar route they must have themselves travelled over the route from the front of a train. We've asked our station side safety Rep's to feedback to us if this actually happens (one of the many benefits of being in an all grades union ).
- Your RMT reps also raised the issue of **face to face briefings at depots**. It has become clear that managers are not complying with the Professional Train Operator's Agreement (PTOA) as well as Rule Book 1- 5.2. The PTOA says that management will commit to *ensure that a defined percentage of work time is allocated to keeping staff informed through one-to-one and group briefings, notices, and newsletters etc.* This is clearly not the case!
- With all the recent focus on service recovery, drivers are under increased scrutiny to efficiently deal with train defects in order to minimise service disruption. We've repeatedly pointed out to management that a driver's **stock refresher within CDP** is, at best, hit and miss, depending on the availability of trains within the depot. Management maintain that if a train is not available then classroom training will suffice. We all know that actually lifting seats , opening cabinets , operating cocks etc ,and getting your hands dirty, is the best method of learning and we've asked management to address this ongoing problem for the benefit of all concerned.
- With the recent introduction of a new rule, Operational Standards Notice (OSN) 114, drivers are required to take their **hand portable connect radio with them when leaving the cab** to deal with an incident. We've pointed out that drivers require better training with regards to familiarisation of the radio equipment. Management agreed to look into this issue. In the meantime, if you have any concerns with your own personal knowledge of how the equipment works then our advice is to submit a memo requesting additional training .

Further information about this meeting or any other meeting that the THSC attend can be obtained by contacting any member of the Train's Council.