

Oliver Stewart
RAIB Recommendation Handling Manager



28 October 2022

Mr Andy Lewis
Deputy Chief Inspector of Rail Accidents
Cullen House
Berkshire Copse Rd
Aldershot
Hampshire GU11 2HP

Dear Andy,

RAIB Report: Serious operational irregularity at Balham on 20 April 2019

I write to provide an update¹ on the action taken in respect of recommendation 2 addressed to ORR in the above report, published on 3 February 2020.

The annex to this letter provides details of actions taken in response to the recommendations and the status decided by ORR. The status of recommendation 2 is **'Implemented'**.

We do not propose to take any further action in respect of the recommendation, unless we become aware that any of the information provided has become inaccurate, in which case I will write to you again.

We will publish this response on the ORR website on 31 October 2022.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Oliver Stewart', written over a horizontal line.

Oliver Stewart

¹ In accordance with Regulation 12(2)(b) of the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005

Recommendation 2

The intent of this recommendation is for Network Rail to develop a handover process that can be used by operational staff performing safety critical roles to improve shared situation awareness.

Network Rail should review the process of handovers between signallers during and at the end of shifts, and develop a formal structure which will give the incoming signaller full awareness of all relevant information about the location and intended movement of trains and the wider operation of the railway in their area of control

ORR decision

1. Network Rail recognise that poor handovers have caused a number of unsafe incidents. To address the recommendation Network Rail has developed an e-learning package aimed at providing operational staff with effective shift handover techniques to minimise the risk of miscommunication or lack of coordination during continuous operations or work activities. The e-learning sets out what a good or poor handover might look like and areas for individual development. We welcome the fact the e-learning takes place on dedicated operational learning days.

2. While the action taken addresses the recommendation, Network Rail are acutely aware of shortcomings in competency management of operational staff, including signallers and control room staff, and are conducting a root and branch reform. Network Rail is considering what it can learn from the train driver licensing regime as it tries to remedy the problems.

3. After reviewing the information provided ORR has concluded that, in accordance with the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005, Network Rail has:

- taken the recommendation into consideration; and
- has taken action to implement it

Status: Implemented.

Previously reported to RAIB

4. On 4 December 2020 ORR reported the following:

Network Rail have set out a plan to consider the recommendation, but it isn't clear what outcome is expected. We have asked Network Rail to clarify how the issues underlying the recommendation will be addressed if the working group does not identify the need for new processes.

In terms of the composition of the working group, we have suggested Network Rail include signallers, rather than just managers to ensure a broader range of issues are taken into consideration and there is more likely to be buy-in for any new procedures.

We have also asked Network Rail to confirm if they are on-track to meet the existing timescales.

Update

5. Network Rail provided the following closure statement signed on 8 April 2022:



N198-05 Balham Rec
2 Closure (004).doc

Previously reported to RAIB

Recommendation 2

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ORR decision

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2. In terms of the composition of the working group, we have suggested Network Rail include signallers, rather than just managers to ensure a broader range of issues are taken into consideration and there is more likely to be buy-in for any new procedures.
3. We have also asked Network Rail to confirm if they are on-track to meet the existing timescales.
4. After reviewing the information provided ORR has concluded that, in accordance with the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005, Network Rail has:
 - taken the recommendation into consideration; and
 - is taking action to implement it by 10 January 2021.

Status: Implementation ongoing. ORR will advise RAIB when actions to address this recommendation have been completed.

Information in support of ORR decision

5. On 21 June 2020 Network Rail provided the following initial response:

The requirement for a handover is and should be carried out as per the current rules although there is no formal structure in place to cover what is and what isn't discussed between the 2 parties when handing over / changing shift, as part of the wider SCC review a team will look at any process and consider a formal process looking specifically at Non-Technical Skills.

Once the team decide if a new process or form is required than this will be formalised, produced and briefed out.

DATE	MILESTONE	END DATE	Chart
01/06/2020	Kick Off Plan, Review Blaham Recs	N/A	15
15/07/2020	Discuss at Ops Managers Group and obtain support		10
30/07/2020	Set Up Working Group		5
01/09/2020	Consider new process and workload		15
30/10/2020	Put in place and actions		10
30/11/2020	Brief to all staf as appropriate		5
10/01/2021	Review and Close out Recs		15