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7 February 2024

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 update[1] on the action taken in respect of recommendation 4 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 recommendation and the status decided by ORR. The status of recommendation 4 is **'Closed'.**

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.

Yours sincerely,

Oliver Stewart

Recommendation 4

The intent of this recommendation is for Network Rail to review and improve its arrangements for managing the competence of PICOPs to ensure that they have the necessary skills to ensure the safe movement of trains within a possession.

Network Rail should review its standards, process and arrangements for managing the competency requirements and ongoing professional development of people who control engineering possessions in which train movements take place. This review should cover, but not be limited to, decision making, team working and communications between PICOPs and other operations staff.

ORR decision

1.   In response to the recommendation, Network Rail have brought together experienced PICOPs and others to revise the relevant standard. The proposed revised standard appears very comprehensive. It sets out the main PICOP tasks, states clearly what needs to be done, with whom and when, comprising a series of performance statements. It also sets out the underpinning knowledge requirements that PICOPs are expected to display. The standard makes appropriate reference to decision-making (through performance standards as well as underpinning procedural knowledge), team-working (through knowing who does what and how when to escalate) and communications (through the importance of clear, concise communication and industry protocols). Taken together these activities are sufficient to close the recommendation.

2.   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 close it.

Status: Closed.

Previously reported to RAIB

3.   On 4 December 2020 ORR reported the following:

Network Rail is reviewing the standards, process and arrangements for managing the competency of staff who control engineering possessions. We will monitor the progress of the working group and have asked Network Rail for a copy of its internal review and recommendations when published, in order to consider if it meets the requirements of the recommendation.

Update

4.   Network Rail provided the following closure statement and supporting documents on 18 January 2024:

[N221-14] Balham Rec 4.pdf

NR_L2_OHS_CTM_02 1 Person in Charge of

PTAS - PICOP.pdf

Previously reported to RAIB

Recommendation 4

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Network Rail should review its standards, process and arrangements for managing the competency requirements and ongoing professional development of people who control engineering possessions in which train movements take place. This review should cover, but not be limited to, decision making, team working and communications between PICOPs and other operations staff.

ORR decision

1.   Network Rail is reviewing the standards, process and arrangements for managing the competency of staff who control engineering possessions. We will monitor the progress of the working group and have asked Network Rail for a copy of its internal review and recommendations when published, in order to consider if it meets the requirements of the recommendation.

2.   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 31 August 2021

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

Information in support of ORR decision

3.   Following an initial response on 21 June 2020, Network Rail submitted a revised action plan on 5 October 2020:

Action Plan

- *A remit for the review of competence standard NR/L2/CTM/021 to be approved by the QHSE Standards Steering Group 01/12/2020*

- *Identify working group membership and terms of reference – 30/01/2021*

- *Hold monthly working groups, January to July, first session – 30/01/2021*

- *Undertake gap analysis to establish difference between current and desired competence and behaviours – 30/04/2021*

- *Conduct a review of current requirements for monitoring PICOP competence 30/05/2021*

- *Review PICOP training and development requirements – 30/06/2021*

- *Report findings and recommendations – 30/07/2021*

Evidence required to support closure of recommendation
- *Remit for NR/L2/CTM/021*
- *Working group Terms of Reference*
- *Workstream action tracker*
- *Results of the gap analysis*
- *Results of the review of current requirements for monitoring PICOP competence*
- *Recommended PICOP training and development requirements*
- *Workstream closure report including recommendations and actions.*