

**Chris O'Doherty**  
**RAIB Relationship and Recommendation Handling**  
**Manager**

Telephone: 020 7282 3752

E-mail: [chris.o'doherty@orr.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:chris.o'doherty@orr.gsi.gov.uk)



17 October 2013

Ms Carolyn Griffiths  
Chief Inspector of Rail Accidents  
Rail Accident Investigation Branch  
Block A, 2nd Floor  
Dukes Court  
Dukes Street  
Woking GU21 5BH

Dear Carolyn,

**Derailment at Bletchley Junction, 3 February 2012**

I write to report<sup>1</sup> on the consideration given and action taken in respect of the recommendations addressed to ORR in the above report, published on 21 November 2012.

The annex to this letter provides details of the consideration given/action taken in respect of each recommendation where recommendations 1 and 3 have been implemented<sup>2</sup>, and recommendation 2 is in progress.

We do not propose to take any further action in respect of recommendations 1 and 3 unless we become aware that any of the information provided becomes inaccurate, in which case I will write to you again<sup>3</sup>. We expect to update you on progress with recommendation 2 by 28 February 2014.

We expect to publish this response on the ORR website on 31 October 2013.

Yours Sincerely

Chris O'Doherty

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

<sup>2</sup> In accordance with Regulation 12(2)(b)(i)

<sup>3</sup> In accordance with Regulation 12(2)(c)



## Initial Consideration by ORR

All 3 recommendations contained in the report were addressed to ORR when RAIB published its report on 21 November 2012.

After considering the report / recommendations, on 11 December 2012, ORR passed:

- Recommendation 1 to Virgin Trains Ltd; and
- Recommendations 2 and 3 to Network Rail

asking them to consider and where appropriate act upon them.

Details of consideration given and any action taken, in respect of these recommendations are provided below.

ORR undertook to discuss recommendation 1 with train operating companies at routine liaison meetings.

### Recommendation 1

*The intention of the recommendation is that Virgin Trains' drivers have sufficient competence in route knowledge and that this knowledge is regularly reinforced by practical application.*

Virgin Trains should review, and amend as necessary, its route knowledge training and assessment process so that the risk from drivers exceeding permissible speeds at diverging junctions is adequately controlled.

The review should consider the need to reinforce the knowledge by driving over the routes concerned, cab simulation, video based scenario training, or other suitable techniques, and the required frequency of each.

Note that the principle applied by this recommendation may apply to other train operators.

### Details of steps taken or being taken to implement the recommendation

1. Virgin Trains Ltd in its initial response on 22 January 2013 advised that:

*The Virgin Trains' Route Knowledge Manager carried out a review of all our routes, both main line and diversionary using the current Route Learning materials, route footage, and Network Rail's National Electronic Sectional Appendix. The Route Knowledge Manager identified those low speed diverging junctions where there was the potential for a similar Bletchley type incident to occur.*

*These locations have been recorded on a two page simplifier that lists the location, route and lowest speed applicable. This simplifier will be printed, laminated and issued as a personal copy to all Virgin Trains' drivers, including transferees and new starters.*

*Following identification of these low speed diverging junctions, each affected Route Risk Assessment has been reviewed and updated as necessary. Similarly, the relevant Route Learning materials and their accompanying assessment papers have also been amended.*

*On a continuous 13 week rolling programme, the quarterly depot Safety Briefing is being utilised to discuss and engage the drivers by reviewing all of those locations*

*identified in the route review that directly affects them and the routes that they sign. This involves question and answer sessions using 'stills' captured from the route footage DVDs, questioning in the format of "Where is this junction?" and "What is the maximum speed through the junction?"*

*As it is not feasible to provide all Virgin Trains' drivers with access to a light locomotive in order to travel over every diverging junction, nor is there sufficient route coverage available via the cab simulator, the Virgin Trains' Driver Management team will mandate when, where and how the driver refreshes via the issuing of a Route Refresh Diagram. Currently, the amended process and frequency (based on link structure) is under consultation with ASLEF Company Council.*

## **ORR Decision**

2. After reviewing information received from Virgin Trains Ltd, ORR has concluded that, in accordance with the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005, Virgin Trains Ltd has:

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

ORR will write to RAIB if it becomes aware that the information above is inaccurate.

**Status: *Implemented***

## **Recommendation 2**

*The intention of the recommendation is that, at potentially high risk diverging junctions, such as those where the approach speed is 60 mph (96 km/h) or greater and requiring a reduction in speed of a third or more, the risk from a train over-speeding on a diverging route following the clearance of the junction signal under approach control conditions is reduced. Different or additional mitigation may be justified depending on the level of risk identified; this may include replacement by position light junction indicators; replacement of junction indicator by one in modern equivalent form; alteration to signalling controls etc.*

Network Rail, in conjunction with train operators, should assess the risk from over-speeding at potentially high risk diverging junctions with approach control following the clearance of the junction signal.

As a minimum, the scope should include consideration of:

- junctions where the speed of the diverging route is significantly lower than the approach speed;
- junction signals fitted with standard alphanumeric route indicators; and
- the type of traction using the junction and its ability to accelerate following the clearance of the junction signal from red.

The outcome of the risk assessments should be used to determine whether different/additional mitigation is required.

## **Details of steps taken or being taken to implement the recommendation**

3. Network Rail in its initial response on 23 January 2013 advised that:

*The recommendation is to be progressed in two parts: part 1 will review of the impact of the recommendation on a sample part of the infrastructure (West Coast South) and assess its impact; part 2 will review this assessment and determine the reasonably practicability of the proposal for national implementation.*

#### *Part 1:*

*A meeting is currently being organised by the Train Operations & Dangerous Goods Specialist to review the impact of the recommendation on a sample part of the infrastructure (West Coast South) and assess its impact. The following will be required at the meeting:*

- *Virgin Trains Driver Manager*
- *Operations Manager West Coast South*
- *Senior Signalling Principals Engineer*
- *Programme Manager LNW*
- *Freightliner Operational Standards Manager*

*The agenda of the meeting will include a review of the incident at Bletchley Junction, a discussion of the recommendation and how it could be progressed; an initial review of the South section of the West Coast Main Line with a view to identifying sites applicable to the recommendation; the current standards and guidelines and their current application to the recommendation; current methods for installation; current risk assessment process and practice.*

*Following the meeting a paper will be produced which will outline the findings including an assessment of costs and benefits and propose a way forward.*

#### *Part 2*

*The paper produced from part 1 will be reviewed and the reasonable practicability of implementing the proposal for national implementation will be determined.*

*Timescales: Part 1 – April 2013*

*Part 2 – To be determined following part 1*

4. ORR wrote to Network Rail, on 8 May 2013, requesting a brief summary of the findings from 'the meeting' and proposed actions to address 'part 2' (including associated timescales).

5. Network Rail advised on 24 September 2013 that:

*An internal review of the output from the workshop held on 19 March 2013 determined that further work was required to satisfy the recommendation. A further review is currently being arranged.*

*Timescale: Update on progress by 31 October 2013.*

#### **ORR Decision**

6. ORR is concerned at what it regards as a lack of urgency/action by Network Rail on this issue.

**Status: In-progress** – ORR will update RAIB by 31 February 2014.

#### **Recommendation 3**

*The intention of the recommendation is to clarify the safety significance of the Weekly Operating Notice with respect to the information that drivers need to know and the best way to present and distribute this information.*

Network Rail, in conjunction with train operating companies, should review and where necessary modify the Weekly Operating Notice to identify the information that drivers need to assure safety and how this content is presented so that it can be readily assimilated.

### **Details of steps taken or being taken to implement the recommendation**

7. Network Rail in its initial response on 21 February 2013 advised that:

*Network Rail is working with RSSB on the review of Group Standard GORT3215 (Requirements for the Weekly Operating Notice, Periodical Operating Notice and the Sectional Appendix) in order to agree if the current format and presentation is provided in the best way possible for drivers.*

*This recommendation also needs to be considered as part of the research into Speeds in general on Britain's Railways which is already underway by the RSSB. Network Rail will continue to support RSSB with this research into Speeds and in particular in relation to this issue.*

#### **Update for S&SD Exec Meeting 18/02/13:**

*A review meeting took place at Westwood on 10 January 2013; the purpose of this meeting was to review the current format of the Weekly Operating Notice, those involved were Operations Principles Specialist, Network Rail, Operations Principles & Standards Manager, Network Rail, Train Operations & Dangerous Good Specialist, Network Rail and Lead Operations Specialist, RSSB. The outcome of this review was:*

- *The current format of the Weekly Operating Notice (WON) in relation to the advertisement of Speeds is fit for purpose.*
- *No further action was required at this stage although all were in agreement that the standard associated with publishing speeds, should be reviewed as part of a bigger industry review (led by the RSSB) into Speeds in general on the Network.*

*A further meeting took place on 29 January 2013 at the RSSB to discuss the remit for the proposed industry review into Speeds on the Network. This meeting was attended by Operational Rules Specialist - Network Rail; who confirmed that the remit for this review would contain the following elements:*

- *Issues to include publications and Module SP.*
- *Appreciation of the scope of initial investigations which might lead to other projects and/or research.*
- *Standards behind Rule Book Module SP.*
- *Preliminary fact finding leading to the scope of work.*
- *An initial workshop once preliminary information emerges.*

*Once the preliminary investigations are made into the elements of the review (above), it will then be possible to establish timescales. Until the timescales are established, Operations Principles Specialist is content with the findings of the initial working Group at Westwood, namely that the current format for the way in which speeds are advertised to drivers in the Weekly Operating Notice is fit for purpose.*

*Timescale: 31 August 2013 for scoping plan*

8. ORR wrote to Network Rail, on 25 March 2013, advising that its response has focused on 'Section A' of the 'Weekly Operating Notice'. However, ORR believes that Network Rail should also review the way in which information on temporary engineering works contained within 'Section B' of the 'Weekly Operating Notice' is published, to make it more user friendly so that drivers are able to quickly find information where normal routes are not available due to engineering works.

9. The recommendation also requires '*...Network Rail, in conjunction with train operating companies, to review and where necessary modify the Weekly Operating Notice...*' your response gives no information of any consultation that may have taken place.

10. ORR therefore required Network Rail to provide further information addressing these concerns, with details of any measures taken or being taken (with a proposed timescale). Network Rail responded on, 21 June 2013, advising that:

*Operations Publications are governed by an RSSB Group Standard for Operational Publications which has recently been reviewed by the industry via TOMSC and no fundamental changes were requested by the main committee of TOMSC or the observers. Network Rail's Operations Principles Specialist has discussed this issue with train operating company representatives and the Operations Team within Network Rail, and concluded that the current format of the Weekly Operating Notice is fit for purpose.*

*It is our view that Section B of the Weekly Operating Notice would not have assisted in this incident as drivers are primarily interested in the open railway and speeds on route; they would not be expected to know every time they are about to pass a line under possession.*

*Speed was a factor in the derailment at Bletchley and the fact that a Temporary Speed Restriction had been in place for several years when it should have been converted to a Permanent Speed Restriction.*

*Network Rail are at an early stage of considering electronic Operational Publications and believe at this point in time it would be appropriate to consider format change in collaboration with industry partners.*

### **ORR Decision**

11. After reviewing information received from Network Rail, 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.

ORR will write to RAIB it becomes aware that the information above is inaccurate.

**Status: *Implemented***