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3 December 2015



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

Dear Andrew,

RAIB Report: Buffer stop collision at Chester Station

I write to provide an update¹ on the action taken in respect of recommendation 2 addressed to ORR in the above report, published on 24 November 2014.

Annex A to this letter provides details of the action taken. The status of this recommendation is '**Implemented**'. We do not propose to take any further action in respect of this recommendation unless we become aware that any of the information provided becomes inaccurate, in which case I will write to you again.

We will publish this response on the ORR website on 11 December 2015.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Eyles

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 to reduce the risk associated with trains approaching buffer stops in low adhesion conditions by an extension of existing defensive driving policy.

Virgin Trains should amend its defensive driving policy so that the requirement to reduce speed to 10 mph or less at a distance of 200 metres from the signal when approaching a danger signal in low adhesion conditions is also applied when approaching a buffer stop with a train that is not fitted with automatic sanders.

ORR decision

1. ORR is satisfied that the amendment to the Virgin Trains Professional Driving Policy, which came into effect on 26 October 2015, adequately addresses the requirement of the recommendation.
2. After reviewing information received ORR has concluded that, in accordance with the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005, Virgin Trains has:
 - taken the recommendation into consideration; and
 - has taken action to implement it.

Status: Implemented.

Previously reported to RAIB

3. On 22 October 2015 ORR reported to RAIB that Virgin Trains had briefed all of its drivers prior to the Autumn 2014 season that the approach to buffer stops during poor adhesion should be the same stopping technique as that adopted during poor adhesion when approaching a red signal, and that its Professional Driving Policy was being reviewed to make this a mandatory requirement.

Update

4. On 1 November 2015 Virgin Trains confirmed that its Professional Driving Policy had been amended through the issue of new General Operating Notice (see Annex B) and briefed out to relevant staff. The effective date of the amendments is 26 October 2015.



General Operations Notice

Professional Driving Policy - amendment

Effective from 26th October 2015

Groups	Drivers, Driver Team Managers	Train Managers, On Board Managers	Station Team, Group Station Managers	On Board Catering Team	Ops Control	Fleet Team	Other Managers	Relevance ratings 3 = Critical/must be acted upon 2 = Need to know 1 = Information only 0 = Not relevant
Relevance ratings	3	0	0	0	1	1	1	

1) Background:

Following recommendations made to Virgin Trains by the RAIB following the Chester buffer stop collision in November 2013, please amend your copy of the *Professional Driving Policy* (Working Instructions, Module 11, Issue 2, June 2012) *Clause 18. Buffer Stops* with the following:


2) Page 8 of Module 11, Clause 18 *Buffer Stops* – replace existing entry with:

4. **Buffer Stops**

Approaches toward buffer stops must be made at caution and your speed must be no more than 5mph one coach length from the stopping point. The train must be brought to a stand no closer than 5 metres from the buffer stop (where there is no VT stop board present.)

Stopping at least 5 metres from the buffer stops does not apply at stations where VT Stop Boards require you to stop closer, or because of restricted platform length that requires the train to draw up to the buffer stops. You must treat the approach in the same manner as any other buffer stop approach but be extra cautious in the final few metres prior to stopping at the defined VT stopping point.

During poor adhesion you must initially approach buffer stops using the 10:10:0 rule as applicable to a signal at Danger, but then modified so as to adhere to the lower speeds and stopping points described in the paragraphs above.

Authorised By  Martin Thomason Operations Standards Manager Virgin Trains	Virgin Trains Safety Reference Number:	GEN/OPS015/262
	Depot Reference Number:	
	Notice to be posted:	26/10/15 – 25/12/15
	Date Posted:	
	Date of Transfer:	
	Notice transferred to Notice Case Number:	
	Date of withdrawal:	