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upfront

Industrial and health & safety news for LUL drivers

Central Line safety issues rumble on



Code red in the depot

An anomaly dating back to the times of PPP when the depots were separated from the operational railway was the loss of many old rules and a procedural parting of the ways. A crucial rule that all drivers fully understand is the 'Code Red.' An essential instruction for a driver to stop their train in an emergency. Bizarrely, in the depot, no such rule exists. The depots still rely upon the emergency stops light system.

Over the past year or so, the number of safety related items reaching the Safety Council, from the west end of the Central Line has gradually increased. Matters that on any other line would be easily resolved locally, if there was a will do so, have now found their way onto the Train's Health and Safety Council agenda.

Issues such as lack of will by management, or no consultation with your elected Trade Union representatives; PTI and CCTC issues; poor quality of the track owing to the Pandrol Vanguard chairs causing excessive noise levels; safety inspections being carried out with no corroborating paperwork being generated; renegeing on agreements reached at local meet-

ings and the list goes on. Having failed to resolve these issues locally the Central Line safety Reps have raised them to the Train's Council in the hope they could be resolved there. Unfortunately there has been a lack of will to resolve the problems at our level. Our Regional Organiser has also raised Central issues with Directors and even they appear to be ignoring us: it is three weeks after a Directors meeting to request a 'line meeting' on the Central Line and still we have no decision.

The RMT are now clear that the ongoing issues will not be resolved using the Health and Safety machinery or diplomacy.

The RMT Train's Safety Council have been pushing for a while now for the 'code red' system to be adopted in all of depots. It makes sense to have the same system in place no matter where we are driving our trains. For one reason or another there has been reluctance by LU to push this issue forward.

At last though, the message seems to be getting through. LU presented paperwork to the THSC at our recent meeting where they are looking to implement the code red method in depots with a trial at Upminster. Strangely, LU's proposal would have the depot tower relay an 'all train's stop' message via the Connect system. It's essentially the same but with different words. We will be pushing for this to be changed to the simple, easy to understand code red.

We'll keep you all updated.

- Read more at www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/trains -

Noise and rough rides worsen

As reported in the RMT 'Up the lower limits where LU are Front' newsletter alongside a required to provide protection BBC news report...

We've had numerous referrals and complaints reporting the state of the track and the ensuing Noise and the rough rides that are a result of this.

The BBC have stated in a report that parts of the network are up to 110dB; and that is just in zones one and two. This is a fact our H&S reps are well aware of and are continually highlighting with management.

The bog standard response from TFL falls woefully short yet again:

"We monitor our noise levels on a regular basis"

What the BBC had failed to recognise in their programme 'Inside Out' is that drivers are enduring these conditions constantly. The most affected lines are Night Tube ATO (automatic) lines as they are often running at optimum speed.

At a recent meeting with the director of track and signals, we were told LU were installing a new track chair (Pandrol Vanguard) which limits vibration to surrounding structures (housing, etc.) but, this in turn creates more localised tunnel noise. This confirmed for us that it is more than likely the cause of the increase in discomfort for both passengers and our T-Ops.

Recent results on the Victoria line showed that noise levels are approaching and exceeding



and because of pressure from the RMT are now offered an alternative in addition to the old fashioned ear protection (spongy type). We are pushing for this to be rolled right out across the tube network.

Night Tube policing

Following pressure from the RMT after a number of Night Tube related incidents, a review of how they deploy police officers on Night Tube has taken place and been introduced with changes aimed at improving arrangements from the last weekend in February onwards. The new changes are:

- Enhanced resources in the outer areas of the network whilst still maintaining an effective capability in central London.
- A specific focus on London Underground termini stations.
- An increased presence on London Underground trains.
- Greater engagement between officers and our front line colleagues so that local intelligence and priorities can be shared.
- More regular reviews so that deployments can be changed as circumstances demand.

Unfortunately we will not be get-

ting any more bobbies on the beat, as ever 'the money just isn't there'. So it remains to be seen if they are just taking resources from central London to move to the outer areas leaving central London open to more issues. However, it looks like the BTP and LUL have finally listened and should be targeting problem areas. Please feedback to your H&S reps of any changes that you notice.

4G in tunnels

We were recently informed that a trial which took place on the Waterloo & City line was successful and that installation of new transmission equipment that will enable 4G connectivity will be installed, once approved at director level.

We were told it is because the mayor wants to make us a "Gigabyte City" and remove so called "Not Spots" (Political code for making money out of the network). We were assured it is safe and that exposure limits will not be exceeded. Risk Assessments will have to be undertaken before all this goes ahead but it looks like this one is coming whether we like it or not.



Get in touch

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