



# upfront

health & safety news

## NIGHT TUBE CONSULTATIONS UNDERWAY



A programme of meetings with management to discuss all aspects of 'Night Tube' is well under way. **Your Trains Safety Council are now having regular (fortnightly) meetings with LU to cover the safety aspects of all night running.** The Functional Council are having similar meetings with LU to discuss all industrial relations issues.

As you can imagine it's quite a task; there is a lot of stuff to cover. We have so far decided to split the work into 4 sub sections: **maintenance** – this will cover all issues related to trains, track and signals. **Security** – this will cover safety of our staff, staffing levels for assistance and all matters to do with BTP: response times etc... **Fatigue** – this will cover shift patterns, duty lengths and general work / life balance. All items that do not fall under these categories will come under a forth 'general' category.

Maintenance issues will broadly be centred on the pressures that continuous running from Friday morning to Sunday evening will have on track, signals and trains. There will also be less available time to maintain these assets. There

will definitely be more technical officers and train maintainers required and some imaginative thinking about where these will be strategically placed along the lines.

The 'security' aspect will be about much more than threats of terrorism. The security of the driver to perform their duties without fear or threat of assault will be paramount. The RMT's position on 'night tube' from the off has been, *that we will not oppose it if it is safe!*

Let's face it; it is unlikely that the majority of punters using night tube between midnight and 4 in the morning will be going to the theatre and on to dinner. The increase in inebriated passengers could have an effect on staff assaults, persons under trains, train strikes and trespass on the track. These will have to be considered in great detail

It is imperative that we have a substantial and visible BTP presence at all times. **All stations open for night running should be staffed by fully qualified personnel.** A roving SS covering 5 or 6 stations would be unacceptable. There would have to be immediate assistance for drivers when required.

Fatigue, shift patterns etc, will also form a large part of the consultations. Until we see concrete proposals about what exactly is being proposed regarding these it is difficult to currently assess.

**We will as always keep you fully informed** and if you have any input then contact any member of the Train's Council.

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## Could relaxation of meds restrictions benefit drivers?



Plans are afoot by management to lift the restriction on driving while taking codeine. Currently any driver medicating with codeine cannot drive a train.

The new proposals would allow drivers to work using a dosage of up to 240mg (4X60mg doses) per day.

Some might think that this is just an exercise by management to get drivers back to work when they are not fully fit to do so. The last thing we want is for depot mess-rooms to resemble a hospital A&E ward. But there could be times when working while on codeine, provided there are no side effects, would stop a driver having to incur an attendance warning. It's a balancing act and the Train's safety Council will be looking at LU's proposals very closely.

Other recently proposed changes to Occupational Health policies include vision testing, colour vision testing and hearing testing. On the surface these appear like positive changes to us but we will need to examine the small print. There have also been recent changes to diabetes protocols.

Given the amount of proposed changes in the pipeline, a member of Occupational Health will be at the next Train's Safety Council meeting to give a full and detailed report on all of the above. We will keep you all fully informed as more information becomes available.

## Depot rules belong in the rule book

The Train's Safety Council have recently raised concerns with management about the lack of rules for depot working in our current Rule Book.

Currently our Rule Book does not cover any aspect of depot working and the only reference

to any depot rules was collated in the line supplements, and even these were hit and miss at best!

The reason for this discrepancy is a legacy of PPP which gave ownership of our depots to 'other bodies' such as Metronet and



Tubelines. It is our belief that as these bodies are, for all intents and purposes, now back in house, it is appropriate that rules relating depots are again placed in the generic LU Rulebook.

It is incredible that such a large slice of our duty, in a potentially more dangerous environment (derailments, persons moving about on track etc...) are left to individual depots to manage.

We will be seeking meetings with management over the coming weeks to attempt to resolve this anomaly.

## Derogation, waiver, concession: it's out of date!

A recent case on the Central Line where a driver discovered an 'out of date' SCD on his train, only to be told "it doesn't matter driver, we have a concession and you can use it after the expiry day" has shone a light on a serious issue.

We have all heard the terms: derogation, waiver, concession; no doubt there are others! But what do they actually mean? And more importantly, are they safe? There have been other recent examples of Jubilee Line trains running with out of date fire extinguishers.

Surely with safety critical equipment 'out of date' means just that!

We have demanded to know: who issues these, when are they issued, how many times a year are they issued and on what equipment.

We will keep you updated.