

Issue 80 / March 2019



upfront

Industrial and health & safety news for LUL drivers

Underground Security

The HOT Protocol – do we finally have an agreement?



Your RMT health and safety reps recently met with management to discuss the HOT process, and bosses finally appeared to listen to our concerns on making it safer.

Previously, LU have stated that staff were, and always have been expected to look inside closed and locked bags and parcels. The RMT, and indeed other unions, pointed out that that this was not the case:

we do not look inside locked bags.

This issue has been rumbling on for the past couple of years; ever since the North Greenwich bomb incident to be precise.

The issue has been discussed at several meetings since. The RMT believed that it had been resolved at a Safety Forum meeting last year. At that meeting LU appeared to back track and accept the

position that the union were putting forward.

Flipflopping bosses

Much to our astonishment, at an October Train's Safety meeting, health and safety reps became aware of imminent changes to Rule Books 6 and 11 that stated staff were to look inside closed and locked bags after all.

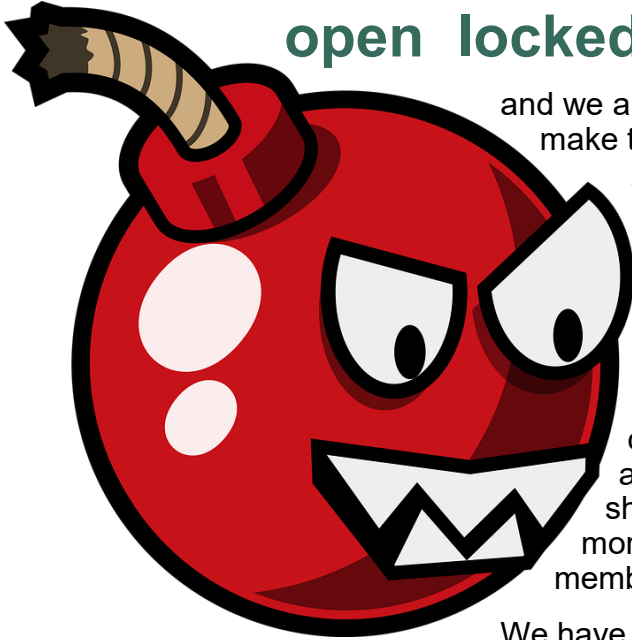
Admittedly, they also said that this was to be done once the item had been declared 'non-suspicious' using the HOT process.

The RMT have long argued, that if a bag or parcel are closed or locked, it's difficult to declare that it is not suspicious as we have no idea what is inside.

Other LU Guidance documents on the HOT Protocol go even further: in the guidance for assessment of unattended items LU wants staff to start forcing open locked bags. **Cont>**

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

Will bosses listen? RMT says forcing open locked bags is not safe



Forcing open unattended bags is certainly not part of our remit.

Over the past two years LU have often claimed that looking inside locked and closed bags is now a Department for Transport position and that we are mandated to do this. The RMT continues to dispute this assertion and have found no evidence to support LU's claim.

The union and LU agree on what we need to do once an unattended item has been declared suspicious. We also agree on what we do if an unattended item has been declared non-suspicious. The breakdown is what we do if bags are closed or locked

and we are unable to make this judgement.

The guidance documents in this instance go further than the Rule Book: it claims if a member of staff is not confident opening a locked bag they should contact a more experienced member of staff.

We have a problem with this.

HOT training

All staff should receive the same HOT training. There are not some members of staff who are more capable of dealing with an unattended item than others.

This wording is unhelpful and could put undue pressure on our members.

At a meeting today between RMT trains' and station's safety reps, our Regional Organiser and LU, we once again stated our position on the HOT procedure.

Some members of the LU

team appeared to be sympathetic to our arguments and agreed that the Rule Book and guidance documents needed to be changed. It needs to be clear that our members are not compelled to look inside locked or closed bags.

We expect LU to make the right decision and have asked them to put their proposals in writing. However, we have been here before.

This is an important issue. Tube workers must not be put in danger due to an unsafe HOT process.

ASLEF did not attend the recent meeting on this issue. It surprised us as they claim to be the 'only drivers' union' and this issue is crucial to drivers safety.

Rest assured the RMT will continue to fight, alone if necessary, for the safety of our 1500 driver members and all drivers and workers on London Underground.

Please get involved, come along to your branch, raise this and other issues and join the fight-back!



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