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# upfront

Industrial and health & safety news for LUL drivers

## RMT push bosses to fix track noise issues

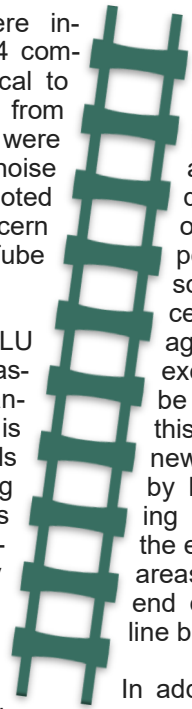
The RMT Trains Health and Safety Council recently met with senior London Underground (LU) management to discuss the issue of excessive track noise which a number of Line Reps have referred to us.

At the meeting we were informed that following 764 complaints from residents local to the railway and pressure from the Mayor's office, LU were tasked with reducing noise level exposure. It was noted this was a particular concern in areas where Night Tube operates.

In order to achieve this LU chose to use a track fastening system called Pandrol Vanguard which is used to isolate high levels of vibration by clamping and lifting the track. This system works by alleviating vibration caused by the wheels of trains bouncing on the track, something known as corrugation. At present 29 locations across the combine have Pandrol Vanguard installed with 6 further locations being considered.

Unfortunately, LU failed to properly test and assess the impact of introducing Pandrol Vanguard as whilst it was suc-

cessful in reducing airborne noise thus pleasing local residents, the vibration noise produced within the tunnel remained contained thus creating the excessive noise experienced by Train Operators and passengers travelling on the train.



Predictably, LU defended themselves by stating that the noise levels are legally acceptable due to Train Operators only experiencing short periods of exposure, something we don't accept. However, LU have agreed that the issue of excessive noise needs to be dealt with and to enable this they will be trying a new mitigation, described by LU engineers as inserting rubber tiles underneath the elevated track at problem areas on the Jubilee line by end of May and the Central line by end of June.

In addition to this LU have a second product they are looking at which they referred to as a Tuning Block, which they say tunes out noise, this should be available within 9-12 months should it be needed. The THSC will be monitoring how effective this mitigation is in reducing excessive noise and will update

### Health and Wellbeing

As we recently reported, the THSC were instrumental in pressing LU to set up a Fatigue Sub Group. There have been a couple of meetings to date and some progress has been made.

We have been pushing LU to educate their managers that fatigue is a serious issue and to take it seriously. Currently a driver would book on for duty, inform the manager that they were feeling fatigued, then be sent home as unfit for work.

The progress made is that LU will now be launching a trial at High Barnet Depot, on June 4th. The trial will consist of a bulletin at book on informing drivers of the seriousness of fatigue, the symptoms and the new reporting process.

All managers at this depot have been briefed on this new process. The trial will last for six months. If it is successful it will be rolled out combine wide. Your local reps have been sent more detailed info on this trial.

If you have any queries or concerns then contact your local rep or any member of the THSC.

- Read more at [www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/trains](http://www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/trains) -

## HOT process proposed changes are unsafe



As reported here previously, the latest version of LU's HOT process contained new advice to drivers: they wanted to make it 'mandatory' for drivers to look inside unattended items. This was unacceptable to the RMT.

LU's rationale for this change were allegedly new directives coming from the Department of

Transport (DfT). Despite several requests, paperwork to support LU's claim was never forthcoming.

After meetings and discussions at every level of the machinery, LU's position appears to have softened. They now agree with the RMT that when drivers apply the HOT process they should

NOT be looking inside unattended items and that you should move yourselves and others away from the area and raise the alarm if you retain suspicions about them.

At this time, we are still waiting for LU to put this position in writing and produce a further version of the HOT protocols. However, this situation has dragged on too long now so the RMT have passed the issue back to our rank and file membership. A resolution has been passed by the RMT Regional Council. The motion calls for a ballot, to take if necessary, action short of strike regarding this issue. This will legally protect our members if LU who apply the HOT process without looking inside unattended items.

Hopefully common sense will prevail.

## Tap water not acceptable

You will remember the water scandal from last year, when LU decided to remove all chilled water coolers from driver's mess rooms and step back rooms.

They never saw a need to remove this facility from their own offices. They insisted that we could drink the hot crap from the tap while they treated themselves to chilled Alpine spring water. 'it's potable' was their favourite phrase of the day!

LU argued that they had no legal responsibility to provide us chilled water, and we responded that they had a moral obligation to do so.

We thought we had won the argument. LU agreed to return the water chillers to all locations where they had been removed. As the hot weather now approaches, LU have decided to come back to us at some locations and refuse to provide chilled water. They are insisting that the tap water is fine; just not for them.

We have a responsible, safety critical role to play in our day time jobs. We move millions of people around London daily. Experts keep telling us that rehydration is essential for concentration. So why are they not providing chilled water at every

location? It simply shows a lack of concern or dignity to us. The RMT will be fighting this injustice with every tool in our locker.

**Having trouble providing drivers with chilled water, management came up with a novel approach to the problem: sack the driver when he goes to get a drink!**

**A Bakerloo Line driver left his train for 30 seconds to get some water and bosses did just that! Fortunately he won his Employment Tribunal and the threat of industrial action concentrated bosses minds.**

**Result? Driver reinstated!**

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