

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF SOUTH EAST ENGLAND



Safe and Sure

A “quick wins” agenda for
Britain’s railways

Proposals by a Rail Safety Task Force

October 2002

This Report was prepared by a Rail Safety Task Force drawn from Soroptimist International clubs in Ashford, Beckenham, Croydon, Eastbourne, East Grinstead, Gravesend, Hastings, Haywards Heath, Lewes, Maidstone, Medway Towns, Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells. It is being published by Soroptimist International of South East England as a contribution to securing safer and better railways in Britain for all.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

People want to feel safe and be safe when they travel. Our report looks through women’s eyes at some aspects of rail journeys that put passengers at risk and under stress. What most people want is staff on the spot and good information. They also want clean and well-lit surroundings. They are particularly fearful of using some stations after dark.

The report uses grass roots surveys of over 60 stations and of rolling-stock, comparing them with five years ago. It also looks at young people’s frightening experiences. Much investment and effort is going into improving the system. Following discussion with a wide range of railway interests and passengers, we suggest both “quick wins” and longer-term action that could without vast expense improve matters and deliver safer and better rail travel for all.

Main weaknesses

- Two thirds of stations inspected showed little or no general improvement compared with 5 years ago although there were welcome and impressive improvements to some.
- CCTV provision on stations and coaches has significantly increased, but remains uncoordinated and of varying quality. It mostly operates as a passive recording device, rather than using its full potential to reduce assaults and disorder.
- Track litter is appalling even at otherwise well-kept stations. No well-run commercial organisation should offer its waiting customers a vista of garbage, weeds and excrement.
- Over half of stations inspected did not display required information items adequately. Basic signage was often poor and general information incoherently presented. Different styles, locations, and presentation across the system, and distracting advertisements, are confusing for travellers.
- Coach safety defects noted in 1997 have still not been put right. Many are being repeated in new stock, in particular poor access to the communication cord and awkward seating.
- Young people who have been victims or have observed frightening incidents on train journeys generally do not report it, but they make less use of rail travel thereafter.
- Responsibility for tackling personal security across the system falls between many stools. Fragmentation of the railways has meant that no central body sees itself in the lead on this basic aspect of passenger safety.

Agenda for action

- **Clear leadership:** The Government should make clear that fostering a system-wide approach to passengers' personal safety forms part of the Strategic Rail Authority's leadership role on safer and better railways. National measures to create a safer and more inclusive society should not stop at the station entrance. The role of the Railway Inspectorate and other rail regulatory bodies on personal security standards generally, and in particular for coach interiors, should be clarified urgently.
- **National quality management:** Rail company managers should adopt a collective approach to deliver a system-wide and instantly recognisable "national product" on personal security and information. This should embrace all the matters discussed in this report. Commitment to a safe and friendly environment should be set out in National Rail Standards and Passenger Charters.
- **Station safety and access to help:** Effective staffing should be a key item in franchise awards. The valuable Secure Stations scheme should develop a range of levels of provision as stepping stones to full accreditation. All stations should have good lighting, a telephone and/or help-points with standard markings, and regular inspections. The British Transport Police/Railtrack "Crime Watch" number should be clearly displayed on platforms, coaches and literature. CCTV provision should be coordinated and standards set.
- **Cleaning up track litter:** The Rail Regulator should require urgently from Railtrack[#] and train operating companies an action plan to meet their statutory obligations on track and platform litter. Research to secure speedy development of cleaning equipment and processes, and retrofitting of train sewage collection tanks, should be put in hand.
- **Standard signage and information:** The Railtrack model of standard passenger signage and international pictograms should be adopted throughout the whole railway system on stations, rolling-stock and travel literature. This would assist confident navigation, and reduce stress and vulnerability. Information should be better categorised, advice given on its location and better maps provided. Ground rules should ensure commercial advertising and facilities are not at the expense of stations' function as gateways to the railway system.
- **Coach safety:** Emergency alarm points should be as accessible and visible to all passengers as the communication cords formerly in use. Regulatory bodies should ensure their requirements to display items of safety information do not interact in ways that create a situation of confusion and risk for train passengers. Coach interior designs should be required to meet basic standards that give full weight to personal security and to the differing needs of the elderly, the infirm and those with young children and luggage.

Chapter 8 sets out a full list of our 78 recommendations. These have been discussed over the past few months with a wide range of railway leaders, gurus, regulators, grant-providers and users. Some of them pick up ideas offered by local railway staff. Inevitably in a report such as this we have highlighted things needing attention. But we have been much encouraged by the many initiatives we have seen, and the energy going into further improvement. As enthusiasts for the future of Britain's railways, we welcome the help we received from all, and the further action already begun to carry forward some of our ideas.

[#] *Railtrack plc* has now been acquired by *Network Rail*.

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Chapter 1: What this report is about

Background

1.1 This report is about ways of helping people to feel safer and less stressed when travelling by train. It looks at what has happened since our 1997 report on this topic[#] and suggests many things that could readily be done now.

1.2 Fear of being in a train crash is not the main thing people worry about when setting off on a journey. Their concern is that their journey should go according to plan. They won't get stranded, lost or have to cope with unpleasant people and situations.

1.3 Worries of this sort are not unique to women, but are often aggravated by fears of sexual harassment or assault. We decided to look particularly at problems experienced by women, by those with children or luggage, by the elderly or arthritic, and when using local railway lines in rural or run-down areas. Anecdotal evidence about teenagers' vulnerability led us to investigate their experiences too. For all of these users, rail travel may be the best or only means to get to work, to visit family and friends, go shopping, get to school or college, have an evening out. Many want to travel at times when commuter needs do not consume all the available capacity, but are apprehensive about doing so. Measures to benefit them could also benefit the industry, the economy and the environment.

What we did

1.4 We assembled initial data during spring 2002 by carrying out grass roots surveys of stations, rolling-stock and the experiences of young people. We then examined a wide range of railways reports, strategies, plans and research documents. During this work and our subsequent discussions with senior railway people, we frequently heard buzz phrases about "quick wins on rail" and greater "customer comfort" to change perceptions and encourage usage. These were two of our aims in drawing up a dossier of practical suggestions. Our ideas were aired at a series of over 30 fact-finding discussions with Government departments, regulatory bodies, railway companies and passenger organisations. We also had many individual conversations with railway staff and passengers on the spot to get their perspectives and ideas. This report is the outcome.

1.5 Throughout our investigation we were impressed by the enthusiasm and commitment of those working to improve things. We welcomed the help freely given by all we met, and the lively interest shown in our ideas. Indeed, some of those ideas are now being pursued in advance of receiving our formal report. That is as it should be.

[#] *Rail travellers and personal safety: Women's perspectives* (May 1997).

Structure of report

Chapter 2 reports what we saw at 62 stations in South East England compared with a similar survey in 1997 and after 5 years of the Secure Stations scheme. It looks at continuing difficulties in locating staff, and getting basic information. It reviews the continuing absence of a national strategy on CCTV, the lack of observable help-points in an emergency, and bad conditions when leaving station premises.

Chapter 3 considers the visual impact of filthy railway tracks at stations, some reasons for the inadequate management attention to this aspect of passengers perceptions, and options for improvement.

Chapter 4 reviews poor signage and information right across the railway system and how this could be improved by adopting a “national rail product” approach, using existing good practice models.

Chapter 5 discusses defects in new rolling-stock design and safety provision that need urgently to be rectified, both in terms of personal security and in relation to the needs of those with bags, luggage and young children, or who are less than robust.

Chapter 6 describes what young people told us concerning frightening experiences on trains and the impact on their subsequent use of rail travel. They are frequently victims as well as perpetrators of bad behaviour. Ideas put forward by them and by railway staff are discussed.

Chapter 7 identifies where clearer responsibility for travellers’ personal safety is urgently needed to secure coordinated action to make Britain’s railway system safer and better for all sorts of people.

Chapter 8 brings together all our recommendations throughout the report.

The Annexes list the stations we visited, surveys we used and organisations we met.



Chapter 2: Stations

2.1 Every rail trip begins and ends at a station and may involve changing trains at others on the way. To see if conditions at these had improved over the past five years following introduction of the Secure Stations scheme, we inspected 62 stations across South East England ranging from unstaffed country halts to major termini. We drew comparisons with conditions observed at 34 of these when we looked at them in 1997. The list of stations visited and the survey forms we used are at annex A.

2.2 At all the stations visited, we concentrated on features we knew directly affected feeling safe and confident. This chapter summarises what we found and consequent recommendations in the light of our examination of relevant literature and our national discussions.

Comparison with 1997

2.3 We assessed whether condition, lighting, sight lines, and supervision had improved. The answer was, a little, but not enough. One third of the stations re-visited had improved, with an impressive make-over in a few. Our inspection teams found some welcome new facilities in the form of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV), lifts, and car park renovation. There was markedly improved cleanliness in most premises, with less rubbish lying around.

2.4 However, two thirds of the stations revisited had little observable remedial work or better lighting, and a few were reported in worse condition. Moreover, where a station had been improved, vandals had sometimes wrecked the work done, wrenching out phones and spraying graffiti.

2.5 At a few stations, more staff were visible, mainly to check tickets at busy times. But the most vandalised stations revisited were either completely or mostly unstaffed and some of these were feared by employees themselves:

“Station covered in graffiti. Litter everywhere”;

“The staff feel vulnerable when opening and closing the office alone”;

“The North Kent lines are the worst. The drivers daren’t walk unaccompanied along the platform in some stations”.

2.6 Station improvements are of little long-term value if poor supervision means they are rapidly degraded. All plans for station upgrades need to include subsequent management as a basic part of the package. During our visits we also observed a new phenomenon of weedy and litter-strewn tracks everywhere, including at stations recently refurbished. The visual impact of this was so marked that we decided to look further into the causes. Neglected surroundings are known to be linked with perceptions of danger. Our findings on track litter are set out in the next chapter.

2.7 During our national meetings, we discussed what seemed painfully slow progress in spreading the Secure Stations scheme sponsored by the Department for Transport. 146 of the busiest stations have been accredited, handling 50% of passenger journeys. But over 90% of stations used by passengers across the system are not accredited. Valuable though this scheme is, it was plain from what we saw that it still has a very long way to go to make an appreciable difference. We heard

conflicting views, some maintaining that it was just a question of winning round grudging train operating companies (TOCs), while others thought the specification hopelessly uneconomic for places with low passenger throughput. A graded range of categories within the scheme might encourage more to participate, even if matters start in some cases at the humble level of the local “best kept stations” awards and some better lighting. A further option might be to encourage local communities to “sponsor” their stations with finance for basic surveys and improvements. The availability of funds through the Rail Passenger Partnership scheme run by the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) to assist this does not appear to be widely known. Actively publicised, and flexibly run, this scheme could encourage early improvements everywhere.

2.8 We recommend that:

- Refurbishment of stations should include management plans for their subsequent maintenance and the prevention of vandalism.
- Plans should be drawn up for a range of schemes as stepping stones to full Secure Stations status and to early improvements everywhere.
- The SRA should actively promote their Rail Passenger Partnership scheme with local authorities and community groups.
- Basic requirements at each station should include good lighting, a telephone and/or help-points, and regular inspections and cleanups.

Current standards of security provision

2.9 Five aspects were examined at all stations visited:

- Who was in charge?
- Was desired information accessible and easily located?
- Did CCTV deployment help security?
- Could help be sought in a hurry from the police?
- Did it feel safe leaving the station?

ASPECT 1: Who was in charge?

(a) Staff on the spot

2.10 Staff on the spot to answer questions and keep an eye on things topped the list of what most people wanted. The cost implications were recognised but it was felt unsatisfactory that one quarter of stations visited were wholly unstaffed, and most of the rest staffed only part-time. The 1997 investigation had indicated that women staff were felt to be more approachable by some passengers, and less likely to be targets of passenger aggression. However men continued to outnumber women nearly 6 to 1, the latter being mainly in booking offices.

2.11 Where stations were staffed part-time, this was often for a few hours only, with nobody on duty for the whole or part of weekends. A few places had no staff present even at advertised opening hours. Our inspecting teams commented on the feeling of insecurity when no staff were there, the

inconvenience to travellers (re tickets and information) and frustrations caused by locked waiting rooms and toilets. They also noted worse vandalism at unstaffed stations, and staff made similar comments:

“Wouldn’t use the station on my own”;

“Toilets locked up at 8.00”;

“Unmanned. Vandalised”;

“Visited in evening – station unstaffed. Many young people hanging about – obvious meeting point – could be threatening”;

“Waiting room locked. Pouring rain”.

2.12 British Transport Police (BTP) officers patrolling or located in station premises, and 24 hour security staff wearing high visibility uniforms, created a much safer “feel”. The new “Connex Specials” and South West Trains “Travel Safe” schemes were welcomed. It was felt regrettable that not all regular railway staff were wearing high visibility clothing. Moreover other measures could have been taken to highlight their presence behind closed doors and frosted windows:

“We travel frequently between 9.30 and 5.30 but never see the staff on the station itself”;

“There is 24 hour staffing though this is not obvious. Staff are in their room on the platform – they are not visible”;

“Various doors are marked Private or Staff only. You would be reluctant to knock if you had a problem or saw something. I tried one and nobody answered”.

2.13 The Office of the Rail Regulator (ORR) and the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) are currently developing a national programme to improve passenger facilities at a long list of stations. Within this, adapting premises to improve staff visibility and the ability to keep an eye on things would make good use of existing resources and help reassure passengers. Items might include transparent windows abutting platforms and waiting rooms, and standard overhead and door signs.

2.14 We recommend that:

- Increased staff availability should be a key item in franchise awards.
- Efforts should be made to deploy more women as platform staff.
- Failure to observe the hours when stations are advertised as staffed should be treated as a performance failure.
- Better solutions to vandalism than locking passengers out of waiting rooms and toilets should be found.
- All staff, whether railway employees, security staff or police officers, should at all times while on duty wear highly visible uniforms or jackets.

Continued 

- Windows should use transparent glass, and other measures should be taken, to help passengers to identify quickly where staff can be found.
- Door signs should be reviewed to ensure they convey the right messages to passengers about accessible staff.

(b) Whom to approach?

2.15. If no staff are there to answer questions, information needs to be available about who is responsible for the station and its security arrangements. Railway companies are required to display information on a list of basic matters at every station including the name of the person in charge. We therefore checked whether this was being done. Fewer than half of stations were displaying this information in a readily observable place. Where a named contact point was given, this was generally some distance away. The impression given was that passengers were out on their own.

2.16 Where information on responsibility could be seen, the form in which this was presented varied from a “passive” address to a positive invitation to send in comments and report problems to a named person. At one third of stations (21), photos appeared of the station manager, and in one case of the station manager and duty manager. While photographs are not essential, their presence caught the eye. The accompanying text in this style of poster had user-friendly wording. However like other information posters we saw, many fell into the trap of wordiness, with too much material burying key items of information. Small print and clutter made some notices difficult to read. One enterprising station manager had posted up the company Passengers Charter alongside, and another, even more commendably, a Security Policy Statement for the station, drawn up by the train company and BTP. We thought this explicit statement was a useful and focussed approach that might be adopted by other train companies.

2.17 It was disturbing that so many stations were failing to display obligatory information properly and that there are no ground rules to place items logically and consistently at the parts of each station where they are most needed.

2.18 We recommend that:

- Every station should be regularly checked to ensure that it is displaying in a prominent place details of the person responsible for its management, and the security officer if different.
- The notice should be clearly captioned, with print of adequate size and with a direct form of wording. Care should be taken not to bury important items of information in a wealth of other material.
- It should encourage people to take up any concerns and should undertake to investigate them and to reply promptly. An objective should be to make travellers themselves feel actively part of helping the system to run safely and comfortably.

Continued ➤➤➤

- Details should be given of the area Rail Passengers Committee as a channel for taking up any wider concerns on passenger personal security.
- The train company's Passengers Charter should be displayed on every station beside the "responsibilities" notice; and a Security Policy Statement drawn up.

ASPECT 2: Was desired information available and easily accessible?

2.19 The most pressing thing people want to know on arriving at a station or changing trains is which platform to use and how trains are running. Many stations now have improved information displays about this, using dot matrix, though these are only as good as the accuracy and timeliness of the details being posted up. We heard many tales of misinformation that generated unnecessary trekking through subways and over bridges, and sometimes led to trains being missed.

2.20 People also want to have:

- Timetables to consult;
- High visibility signage to facilities like toilets, trolleys and onward travel by taxi, bus or underground;
- Station signs and plans to guide them round large complexes and interchanges, and local street maps as they leave station premises;
- General information about matters such as disabled access, and lost property.

2.21 At almost every station we visited, timetables were clearly displayed. However in some cases there were problems with location and with size of print. In one station, users had to kneel down to read details for Saturday and Sunday. Moreover while red print helps some people, it is a problem for the colour-blind. Since even seasoned rail travellers generally need to check the timetable variations at the weekend, presentation of timetable information needs improvement generally.

2.22 Practices and standards on other key information were far more patchy:

"Local information, maps, timetables – excellent";

"It is a very busy station. Sometimes information is obscured by people and there is a proliferation of adverts and other signs";

"Easiest to see where displayed free-standing";

"Security information appears in the middle of the information board with train times, so the phone number is not very visible";

"Very little information in booking hall. The whole station seems to have minimal facilities. Station staff say notices are constantly stolen";

"Local maps are awful, embedded among adverts. The accompanying "useful" numbers are not at all reassuring: they range from the Samaritans to Alcoholics Anonymous and Missing Persons, and leave out the things you want".

2.23 Information on Special Needs Travel was provided erratically, its location ranging from admirably clear and well-displayed notices near the booking office with details and phone number, to references buried among other information, to none at all.

2.24 Basic problems everywhere were:

- Failure to categorise information by type and importance ;
- Poor “flagging up” via standard captions and presentation;
- Inappropriate locations;
- Precedence given to commercial advertising.

We felt that such fundamental defects in basic communication needed to be tackled comprehensively right across the railway system. We could identify nobody who saw this as their responsibility, although many people expressed interest in the idea, and we saw good practice on signage being developed by Railtrack. Our findings on signing and information generally are discussed in chapter 4.

ASPECT 3: Did CCTV deployment help security?

2.25 When we reviewed station security in 1997, high hopes were being pinned by some on the extended provision of CCTV cameras as a universal panacea. However many women felt these would not produce a quick enough response to an incident.

2.26 Our 2002 survey showed a big jump since 1997 from under one third to two thirds (45 out of 62) in the number of stations visibly equipped with CCTV. More were also appearing in car parks as part of “Safer Car Park” schemes. They seemed in working order save in 5 stations and one car park, in two cases clearly vandalised.

2.27 In two thirds of stations operating CCTV (29 out of 45), there was an observable notice to that effect, but sometimes this was unobtrusive eg stickers on a post. It was felt this reduced the deterrence and reassurance value. We wanted to know how many of these cameras were monitored live. At many stations there were no staff to ask, and at some others staff would not tell us, perhaps for security reasons. In 15 (mainly large and busy) stations we were told there was live monitoring by station staff especially ticket office, or by BTP. However we suspect some of our survey returns may have over-estimated how much real-time watching was taking place, since the information was provided in off-the-cuff staff replies. Mostly cameras simply taped footage for later scrutiny where there had been a serious incident:

“I was told it is recorded and the tapes are kept and viewed if there were an incident”;

“Recorded only and viewed if an incident were to occur”.

At two stations staff volunteered that the picture was unsatisfactory.

2.28 We were unable to ascertain what instructions exist for station staff about themselves intervening, if they see on their CCTV screen someone being threatened or assaulted. As users we are clear we want immediate help, not just a taped record for evidence afterwards.

2.29 It was disappointing that all the issues we had raised in 1997 about siting, monitoring and quality were still as relevant. We explored the reasons for this during our discussions at national level and found that many of the people we talked with had the same four main concerns as ourselves. Moreover the current installation of CCTV in new coaches seems even less coordinated than station CCTV.

i. Standards and maintenance:

These are still not mandatory, and much apparatus in use fails to produce satisfactory images for identification purposes.

“We have got a real mixture in terms of the product. It goes from the worst to the best”;

“TOCs have more CCTV, are more CCTV rich than anyone. But some of them are very old, not a lot of use, badly maintained. The image and recognition capability are poor”;

“There needs to be an overall standard”;

“They just want to put a tick in a box to say it’s done. Dare I say they know nothing about on-board CCTV”.

New “smart” CCTV is being developed to alert monitoring staff to “unusual events” in a regularly scanned area, but this is still at an early stage. As with other forms of technology, future budgets will need to provide substantial resources to keep at the cutting edge. One major organisation rated clearer image quality as the top priority.

“Getting the quality right would make the other issues simpler”

ii. Ownership:

Rail companies, BTP, local Police Forces and local authorities are being funded by different departments to instal CCTV. The outcome has been parallel or overlapping operational systems, with no firm national lead about what the general long-term strategy and standards should be. This hampers effective use of costly equipment. Several organisations criticised this:

“Despite the investment, it is massively under-exploited. You don’t need to invest a lot more in the product. You need to invest in its management”;

“Most companies are installing CCTV on a fairly random basis”;

“It’s pointless if there’s nobody looking, maintaining the installation, collecting the information”.

Alternative approaches mooted included:

- an “integrated route line” system of cameras feeding into each company’s control centre;
- closer integration with local town centre systems “where the yobbos hang out”, since “The more you can put pressure on local authorities to be interested in stations, the more likely it is there will be progress. You must convince the local authority it is the hub”;
- investment by BTP in its own systems, funded by SRA; and
- a reflective pause to assess whether there was any real benefit from the large sums that had been poured into their systems so far.

iii. Real-time versus just recording:

Most railway CCTV is simply a recording machine. Real-time monitoring of cameras is too staff-intensive, though the “clever” cameras being developed should assist. Tapes are examined the next day only if a serious incident has taken place, when they may be used in evidence. We were told that knowledgeable offenders could remain anonymous by using a hood, or blocking the camera lens, since a passive camera could not respond by tracking

them. One train driver on a graffiti-daubed local train told us that he felt reassured by his train's taped CCTV system, even though some travellers regularly blocked the camera lens with chewing gum and paper "for a laugh".

iv. Deterrent value:

The main value of CCTV, particularly where widely advertised, was seen as providing a deterrent for some sorts of antisocial behaviour, eg car park theft. It was less likely to prevent unpremeditated assaults. We asked about linkage between cameras and public address equipment, as used in London Underground, to allow an immediate voice message from the monitoring centre saying "You are being filmed on camera" or "Will the group on platform x calm down and behave sensibly". We were told that a Scottish rail company was experimenting with "the Voice of God", and we saw a new system of this sort being installed at Brighton. This linked approach might be a useful extra deterrent to misbehaviour, perhaps also connected with help-points. More might also be done to convey the message that CCTV is operating.

2.30 Our overall conclusion is that publicly-funded CCTV needs a coordinated and proactive approach right across the system if full use is to be made of it. This should cover standards, ownership, management and deployment on stations and rolling-stock alike, including voice linkages. Otherwise a tool of great potential value will be inefficiently used and public money wasted. We also should like to see clear national instructions about whether railway staff should personally intervene in the event of their CCTV screen showing an assault, with no other help being at hand.

2.31 We recommend that:

- A national CCTV strategy and standards should lay down a framework for the many individual initiatives and publicly-funded investments being undertaken.
- This should also apply to CCTV in coaches.
- The effectiveness and value for money of CCTV in differing railway locations should be carefully researched.
- Close attention should be paid to the effective management and maintenance of existing systems.
- There should be linkages between CCTV deployment and public address systems.
- The existence of CCTV surveillance should be more effectively advertised on the spot to raise awareness.
- National guidance should be given to railway staff about whether they should go to the help of a passenger being assaulted or threatened.

Aspect 4: Could help be sought in a hurry from the police?

2.32 While staff on the spot would be most people's preference, the next best thing is a "hotline" to report problems. In 1997 we recommended a dedicated central Rail Crime Watch number and provision of clearly marked emergency help-points on every station, using standard symbols. Our inspecting teams looked at what was now available.

(a) BTP/Railtrack hotline number

2.33 We are glad to see the new high visibility posters with a 40 50 40 call number and the message “We’ve made it easy to report railway crime ... lives may depend on it”. However, only half of stations visited had the posters on display.

2.34 At the 29 stations where the poster was seen displayed, locations varied widely eg waiting room, booking hall, office, staff office, and behind refuse bins. One was also observed well-displayed in a railway coach.

“It had to be pointed out where it was. But once I knew where it was – in the centre of the station – it was prominent”;

“It’s in the booking hall which is locked when the station is unmanned ie all afternoons and the whole of Sunday”;

“It is in the supervisor’s office on the station platform. I was told there was no point in showing it on the station since they are never available if phoned from there”;

“Only other less relevant numbers were on show”.

2.35 Unfortunately there appears to be no requirement to display this admirable poster and no guidance about appropriate locations. We hope this will be pursued together with our 1997 suggestion that the number should also appear on pocket timetables, ticket backs and general information boards.

2.36 We were unable in the time available to explore how swift and effective a response is made to any calls to the new number, and whether there is feedback to callers about outcomes. We heard some doubts expressed about this and hope that there will be public scrutiny and performance standards. If widespread use is made of the new number, there will need to be a capability to handle calls promptly.

2.37 We recommend that:

- National guidance should require the Rail Crimewatch 40 50 40 poster to be prominently displayed at recommended locations in all stations.
- The number should be prominently incorporated in basic station information displays and other railway literature such as pocket timetables and travel tickets.
- The effects of this should be monitored, including the level of public recognition of the call number.
- BTP response rates to calls should be monitored and published.

(b) Emergency help-points

2.38 These can take various high tech or low tech forms depending on the type of station, ranging from ordinary telephones to the interactive South West Trains models, monitored by CCTV. In two 24 hour stations we were told staff with radios were the help-points. However at two thirds of stations visited there was no obvious help-point anywhere, and in 5 they were obviously not working:

“A machine but not yet in operation”;

“Emergency telephones were placed around the station. One had been removed because of vandalism by kids”;

“Help-point recently installed and now out of order”.

2.39 Some were available only on one platform or unavailable at certain times and others were hard to see:

“There is an emergency telephone on one platform which is not easily visible. I raised this question – and the answer is that when it is prominently advertised it is vandalised and unusable”;

“Only on one platform and not in booking hall”;

“The station staff said they would like it on each platform and manned barriers. There were incidents of hooligan behaviour”.

2.40 Methods of marking were varied and haphazard. Some used words, some symbols, some were small unmarked green or yellow boxes. We were told by station employees in one place that boxes marked with a small green “emergency phone” picture were strictly for staff use only (*“It doesn’t go anywhere”*); and contrariwise in another that passengers could use them in an emergency. The instructions inside one such box we examined implied they were for public use since they advised calling 999 for a really urgent matter and there was a hearing induction loop. It seemed that staff were as unclear as the public about who these phones were actually for. We met mixed views about help-points among railway people ranging from antagonistic *“A help-point is no good if there’s nobody on the other end”* to enthusiastic *“Absolutely vital for unstaffed stations”*. We were told that some help-points were used by graffiti artists to establish how much time they had available before the next train came along.

2.41 We welcome the spread of clearly marked help-points in the London Underground, now being replicated on some South West Trains stations. We recognise there is a big question mark over who should actively respond to calls from these. There needs to be an overall strategy that complements responses to the new 40 50 40 number and CCTV management, and meshes with local policing. The current confused situation on these matters is not an acceptable reason for denying some form of basic access to emergency help as standard provision on every station, especially if unstaffed. In particular, the response system needs to be systematically planned and coordinated with that of local police forces, since wrongdoers move freely between various domains.

2.42 Points also should be located in the actual places where people are likely to need them, clearly visible, including at night, and marked in a standard way. A universal model would help people use them in a hurry without having to master unfamiliar instructions while under stress and perhaps in the dark. The layout of seating, lighting, and help-points should be designed to give clear CCTV coverage. This would help prevent misuse. Any damage should be immediately logged and repaired as a high priority matter.

- 2.43 We recommend that:
- A readily visible emergency help-point should be provided on every station, and preferably every platform. The system should be easy to use when people are frightened or in the dark.
 - Where a sophisticated help-point is being provided, the standard model might be that appearing on London Underground and South West Trains.
 - A strategy should be developed to coordinate responses to help-points, to 40 50 40 calls, and to incidents captured on CCTV, in association with local police.
 - All emergency help-points of whatever type across the railway network should be clearly marked in a standard colour, preferably bright yellow, and with a standard symbol and wording. The same symbols and colours should appear on emergency alarms on trains.
 - All help-points should be observable through CCTV.
 - Repair of damaged help-points should be a high priority, with performance targets set on response time. This may require daily checks at unstaffed stations.

ASPECT 5: Did it feel safe leaving the station?

2.44 Users in 1997 raised three concerns, particularly when emerging after dark. These were:

- immediate access to a taxi or the ability to call for one;
- a safe and well lit place to wait; and
- a safe route to the car park.

2.45 Some stations had a taxi rank and most showed a phone number for taxis (itself an obligatory requirement) though it was not always easy to find, and in over a quarter of stations (17) it was not observable anywhere:

“Unmanned but telephone in private house, people who live by; always very helpful”;

“Telephone number shown but no telephone”;

“No taxi rank. Number to call but rather isolated”;

“There is a phone but no taxi numbers. Staff will give passengers a local taxi number”;

“Poorly lit and isolated. The nearest phone 180 metres away”.

2.46 Many people nowadays have mobile phones but a great many do not, in particular the elderly and less well off. We felt that access to a telephone on station premises was a must.

2.47 At two thirds of stations (43) there appeared to be a safe place to wait for cars, taxis, or buses, though in some cases there was poor lighting:

“Rather dark at night – little light”;

“Not late in evening”;

“Car park dimly lit”;

“There is a taxi rank outside the station and the taxi office is immediately opposite. However the lighting is not particularly good”;

“Very few people there in evening and was suggested I go to pub to wait”.

2.48 At the remaining third of stations it was thought there was no safe place to wait, mainly (but not always) at unstaffed rural stations:

“In the middle of nowhere”;

“Well lit but not safe”;

“Poorly lit and lonely”.

2.49 As other surveys have shown, car parks were thought of as a hazard, though some had been improved. At 4 stations it was thought the route to the car park felt unsafe:

“Back part of car park is isolated, quite dark”;

“It’s still scary at night times and dark early evenings”.

2.50 We recommend that:

- A telephone in working order should be provided in a well-lit location at every station, however small. Contracts with telephone companies should require any faults in the apparatus to be immediately repaired.
- Every station should clearly display taxi company numbers in a standard and immediately recognisable notice at the entrance and beside all phones.
- Local taxi firms should be encouraged to locate vehicles at stations and develop other ways of providing a reliable quickly accessed service.
- Good lighting should be installed outside stations preferably associated with locally-linked CCTV.



CHAPTER 3: TRACK LITTER

Why track litter matters

3.1 Litter affects perceptions about a place being cared-for and safe. Our surveys noted marked improvement in the cleanliness of many stations with better swept platforms. The situation was very different when it came to track-bed litter. This chapter describes the further survey and discussions we undertook to investigate why the general appearance of the track had so noticeably deteriorated over the past five years, including at newly refurbished stations.

3.2 There is a national litter problem caused by modern packaging practices and materials, and by public propensity to eat and drink on the hoof and discard containers to blow around. However, conditions we saw on railway property were distinctly worse than in other locations where we had experience of litter reduction projects. Moreover track litter has some special features:

- it contains human excrement voided onto the track from toilets in old style rolling-stock. This is not only offensive in itself but also an invitation to rats;
- there is a propensity to sweep or throw items onto the track, as a handy means of keeping the platform clear. Even without that, the air movements in stations tend to waft lightweight platform litter onto the track;
- fear of bomb explosions has led to the removal of all waste bins from many stations;
- railway safety requirements prevent platform cleaning staff from going down onto the track to litter-pick. There are stringent safety precautions, usually “track possession” by contractors, with electric power switched off;
- people waiting for trains have little choice but to gaze upon the litter and worse immediately in front of them. We wonder what other business would require its customers to gaze upon this unsavoury cocktail.

3.3 No doubt all these matters could be satisfactorily dealt with. Indeed they have to be, since the provisions of the Environmental Protection Act apply to railway premises and tracks as in other public places. In some places litter abatement notices have been served to require the mess to be immediately cleared up, but local authorities have so far mostly left the railways to their own devices.

What we found

3.4 Unfortunately, railway companies interest in taking effective unprompted action has been lukewarm. The consequences are illustrated by the case studies at Annex C. Track litter counts were carried out at 4 stations, of different sorts and sizes. Similar findings could be obtained at stations everywhere. In each case, track litter was a significant blot on the visual landscape. At one station, the track for the length of four coaches was so heavily littered that items could not be counted. At another, in a town where street cleaning was seen as important for its tourist trade, the station track for the length of ten coaches was strewn with 111 discarded drink cans, 92 bottles, 81 cups and 30 fast food cartons, much of it embedded in black grease. These were the most frequent litter items at all stations along with cup covers, fruit drink containers, and sandwich holders. At some there were

significant numbers of discarded tickets. The general setting was scattered decomposing paper, foil, plastic bags and cigarette stubs, sometimes mixed with excrement from train toilets. Everywhere weeds were thriving, and in one case clearly rats were as well.

The causes of this

3.5 We discussed with train company staff, regulatory organisations, security officials and Railtrack how this state of affairs had come to pass and whose job it was to put matters right. Statutory health and environmental obligations are widely being flouted.

3.6 The picture that emerged was of split responsibilities and a “not on my patch” mentality. Platform and track are seen as separate domains, despite the fact that litter draws no territorial distinctions between them. We were told the job of tackling litter was “a grey area”, resting uneasily between Railtrack, train operating companies and commercial businesses sited on the platforms: “It was one of those bits not properly thought about when the railways were broken up”. There had been low management priority, disagreement about measures and costs, and slack supervision of contractors.

3.7 It seemed to us that it was Railtrack’s job to take the lead in getting the situation sorted out. Reducing litter does not figure in their current Safety and Environment Strategy, action items or performance targets. They were frank that “the matter has received too little attention and now needs to be put right”. We were told that the next environmental strategy document would probably address it and that our suggestions for action would be considered carefully. We welcome this. However it will also require a more strategic approach and management attention by train operating companies.

Areas for action

3.8 These come in three broad categories.

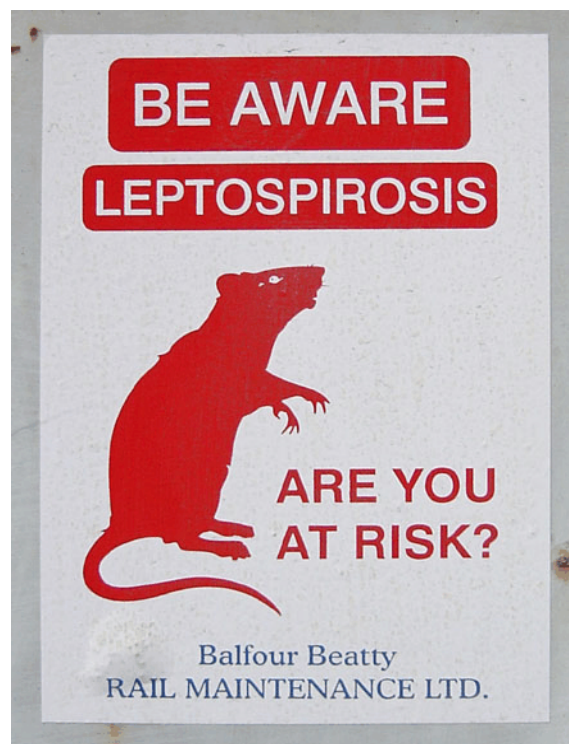
i. Stopping litter creation at source:

The obvious best option to be applied everywhere. Train operating companies need to be in the lead on this. One train company told us “We have contributed to the problem ourselves by creating all these franchise activities on platforms, without considering the consequences”. They planned to review possible action. All operators need to do likewise. In respect of train sewage, we were told that action was technically possible to tackle track dumping, both by discouraging or preventing toilet flushing while the train was stationary, and by retrofitting sewage holding tanks. This is a topic in which the SRA might take an interest when awarding franchises.

ii. Offering people ways to dispose of litter responsibly:

Our discussions with national security officials revealed that a frequently-offered “justification” for the present situation – namely that no litter bins were allowed – has not existed since mid-2001 when fresh guidance was given to train companies about what was permissible. This did not appear to have percolated through to many station staff. The initial blanket ban on all bins now applies only to a limited list of high risk premises. Others may use bin hoops with transparent litter bags. One litter source that could immediately be dealt with everywhere by management was careless staff disposal of used tickets. Proper and well-advertised disposal facilities should also be part of contracts with retail franchises.

- Cleaning contracts should be reviewed to increase frequencies to appropriate levels, and performance standards on these checked, with penalties for bad performance.
- Discussions should take place with all retail franchises in stations about the types of litter being generated and a litter minimisation policy should be stipulated.
- Derelict tubs lingering on from defunct floral and “best kept stations” competitions should be removed or preferably regenerated so as to reduce their use as litter bins.
- Station staff should be required to dispose appropriately of used tickets.
- Sewage retention tanks should be retrofitted to older types of rolling-stock, and other measures developed both to prevent track-bed discharges and assist cleaning-up excrement.
- Railway Safety research programme should develop equipment and materials that can be operated safely from platforms to clean track, and to simplify cleansing.
- The ability of platform staff to clear track-bed litter at appropriate stations, subject to proper safeguards, should be clarified by Railway Safety and the Railway Inspectorate.



CHAPTER 4: SIGNS AND INFORMATION

4.1 Good information is reassuring as well as necessary. The visual scene influences the public's perceptions of safeness and reliability. Large-scale commercial retailers therefore pay close attention to providing a familiar format of bold signage and standard layout for their outlets all over the country. This is not the case across the railway system.

Signage problems

4.2 Signage is often poorly thought-out. Way-finding directions peter out or lead to a locked gate. Facilities are signed that no longer exist ("Parcels Office"), while others are hard to find. Varied formats, lettering and colours are hard to recognise or read from a distance, with little use of standard pictorial symbols. Many locations are badly lit or information has to be read "against the light" including many of the elaborate new dot matrix boards. Illuminated commercial signs crowd out station signing.

Information problems

4.3 Information is equally incoherently presented. Basic problems include:

- **Failure to categorise information by type and importance:** National station access conditions requiring local provision of information badly need to be rationalised and simplified. Train companies' information cascaded to local stations is not marked in systematic categories for display.
- **Poor "flagging up" to catch the eye:** We were told that "white boards", ie those with a plain white frame, signify railway information, but what traveller knows this? Even this is no longer a general principle, with many frames repainted in "company livery". There is no rationale to captions. "Dear Customer", "Important" and the "i" symbol may signal anything from vital safety or travel information, to an announcement that a new tea bar is to be opened or the ladies toilets have been refurbished.
- **Inappropriate locations:** Travel information seems to be posted up wherever station staff have found a space. Only rarely is it located exactly where needed.
- **Precedence for commercial undertakings:** Many key sites have been surrendered to commercial advertisers and operators.

4.4 Finding one's way ought to be straightforward. One train company told us they were about to review basic signage and information. Their initial rush after privatisation to treat this as an aspect of company branding had been "*a big mistake and quite the wrong way to go*". Another said they planned to move to general use of immediately recognisable "pictograms," such as those for male/female toilets, or disabled access. We welcome these initiatives but feel this is not a matter for each company independently to review and change. It needs a standard "national rail product" delivered everywhere, and recognisable everywhere.

4.5 Railtrack have been introducing new signage in the 14 major stations which they own and manage, through which half of Britain's rail passenger journeys pass annually. We visited two of those stations to examine their signs and information, and also two major terminals not under Railtrack management.

The Railtrack approach to station signs

4.6 Passenger surveys carried out by Railtrack were used to develop their station make-overs. They identified a hierarchy of things people want at stations. In volume terms this wish-list forms a pyramid:

catering
environment
facilities eg toilets
navigation information
a general feeling of security
staff in charge and answering questions
accessible information about trains and platforms

4.7 Railtrack is accordingly paying close attention to making train indicator information and navigational signage highly visible. As one manager put it "*the minute you start dithering, you start to feel vulnerable*". Moreover, visible uncertainty makes people more likely to be harassed or to have things stolen from them.

4.8 As ordinary users, we were impressed by the approach being followed. It uses:

- easily read Brunel font in white on a dark blue background. This has been tested as being the easiest combination to read with defective sight or colour blindness;
- immediately recognisable pictograms of international UIC[#] symbols (eg as used in timetables). This not only avoids getting out of step internationally, but also helps those for whom English is not a first language, or who have literacy problems;
- huge four-sided suspended blocks showing pictograms and words in a way that is effective and dominant above the advertising razzmatazz;
- removal of out of date and irrelevant signs;
- matching colours and symbols on station plans, maps and leaflets.

4.9 We think this is a good format that could readily be adopted generally across the system, and has the advantage of already becoming familiar to millions of rail users. The programme currently being developed by the Rail Regulator and Strategic Rail Authority for "incremental station improvements" offers a unique opportunity to encourage standardisation since many new station signs will have to be installed. Stemming the unplanned and unhelpful drift into variations would be a much-needed quick win for all travellers.

[#] *Union Internationale des Chemins de fer*: this sets international rail traffic standards.

Other information

4.10 We think that more also needs to be done to categorise various types of official notices that inform, warn, advise and exhort. The most urgent are probably

- temporary location or route changes on the station itself eg due to contractors works;
- urgent travel messages eg train cancellations, imminent engineering track works;
- where to go to get help with a problem;
- where to find onward travel facilities on leaving the station.

4.11 We should like to see a systematic approach to distinguishing these types of information. Other aspects to be covered should include:

- i. map provision;
- ii. visibility of police premises;
- iii. key advertising locations; and
- iv. information inside coaches (where most travelling time is spent).

(i) Provision of local maps

4.12 We saw many mediocre local maps in stations. It was difficult to pin down responsibility for this. We were told there were longstanding commercial franchises awarded by BR for “local information points” but we met nobody who saw it as their job to see if these match today’s needs. Naturally, franchise holders wish to use their space for revenue earning. We saw perfunctory small local maps and information items embedded among advertisements, ill-designed for those on foot. They omitted bus-stops and taxi ranks, local post and police offices, public lavatories, and even key tourist sites. The standard, and scarcely reassuring, selection of so-called “useful information numbers” offered in many places ranged from Samaritans to Alcoholics Anonymous, as noted in chapter 2. Some main line stations are offering new exit maps, but quality provision is needed at every station on the system.

(ii) Visibility of police premises

4.13 There is good reassurance value in highly visible “Police” signs such as that at Waterloo Main Line. These could however usefully be associated with much more open police station frontages where security information is advertised and conveyed through on-the-spot dot-matrix screens, and leaflets. We had difficulty finding the premises on some stations. BTP told us that they often had problems over obtaining suitable locations for premises and signs, because the operating company wanted to maximise commercial revenue. If this is so, it warrants a fresh look by the operators at whether they have a wise strategy. The converse view we heard is that such provision is pointless unless BTP people are there on the spot.

(iii) Key advertising locations

4.14 We appreciate the heavy pressure on railways to earn commercial revenue from prime station sites. Likewise we understand why they want to attract more retailers onto station premises in shopping malls and eateries for the wider neighbourhood. However, this needs to be done in ways

that do not lose sight of the function of railway stations as gateways to the system. Ground rules should be firmly established about types of railway space that are sacrosanct. These might include all overhead “air” space, indicator areas and floor space in circulation areas (people thought well-placed floor stands were the most effective way of delivering urgent information).

(iv) Information inside coaches

4.15 A coherent approach to information inside coaches also needs to be agreed to ensure:

- essential safety and travel information is clearly visible and simply presented rather than festooned round doors, and scattered piecemeal elsewhere;
- standard pictograms and other familiar visual cues are used. If the internationally recognised man/woman symbol is used on stations, why write “toilet” in the coach? The same emergency help-point symbol should be used on stations and coaches alike.
- they all display the 40 50 40 number and details of the Rail Passenger Committees.

4.16 The next chapter looks at problems in getting to emergency alarms. But even before making the attempt, people first need to see where these are located. We were concerned about the many different messages at doors, not all of which needed to be placed there. This seemed a recipe for mistakes – perhaps disastrous – by passengers acting under stress.

4.17 Thus, in a new coach design we looked at, a small hooded button marked “emergency alarm” is hard to see high up at the side of the door. A red notice lower down at right angles says “Fire alarm call point” and bears a flames symbol. We asked nearby passengers what they thought this signified. Most said a fire extinguisher. Nobody thought it marked a general emergency alarm, nor do the instructions for use say so. There is however a separate visible “green running man” unit with emergency instructions to “remove cover, pull handle, wait for train to stop”. This might therefore be what a passenger thought they should do.

4.18 The largest notice above the door advised the exiting passenger “you are not alone” because CCTV was operating. This seemed a little belated to reassure or deter, nor was it easy to see from other parts of the coach. But it added to the pieces of information that might need to be read in a hurry. We saw a quite different approach to conveying information in a Networker coach, with a single prominent notice near the door covering different circumstances, and where to find emergency equipment. This made things clearer, but was rather lengthy, and not easily read from a distance. We think as a matter of public safety, those deploying signs inside coaches should get their act together. Safety information should be instantly recognisable, easily comprehended and in standard places, no matter what type of stock is being used or what company is running the service.

4.19 We recommend that:

- The Railtrack format should be adopted for colours, fonts and international pictograms for basic signage throughout the railway system, including inside coaches.
- Contracts for provision of local maps throughout the system should be revisited to require basic quality standards and information.
- Research should identify basic principles for appropriate groupings, captions and locations of different categories of information, for national adoption.
- National Station Access Conditions should give a clearer steer about where and how to present obligatory information including security hotlines.
- BTP premises on stations should be more visible and open.
- Ground rules should be established to ensure commercial advertising is not at the expense of passenger information and their sense of security.
- Steps should be taken at national level by regulatory bodies to ensure that safety information appears in standard recognisable forms and locations that avoid confusing and endangering train passengers.



CHAPTER 5: PASSENGER ROLLING-STOCK

5.1 A safe and reassuring coach interior is as important as a safe and reassuring station. People are travelling sealed into a box with strangers. Rolling-stock design that fails to provide for passenger security concerns is unfit for its purpose. Our inspections showed that no action has been taken on the coach design points we raised in our 1997 report. On the contrary, current plans to refurbish Networker stock and new designs of 375 stock perpetuate, and in some respects aggravate, defects.

Problems with Networker rebuilds

5.2 The 1997 report pointed out serious design defects in Networker trains, including poor communication cord access. This affected all users and in particular vulnerable people. One of our members trapped in a carriage with no communication cord within reach was victim of a serious assault, and other women told us of sexual harassment and knife threats. The coaches also had poor provision and various hazards for those with bags or luggage, accompanied by children, or who were physically frail. At our request, “repeater” signs were put up in some Connex SE trains pointing to the nearest emergency call point, and warning lines were painted on the half-steps to reduce the risk of falls. We were told other measures must await refitting and new builds. Annex D sets out extracts from our 1997 report which equally apply today.

5.3 At a recent public meeting about their plans to “cascade” ageing Networker stock onto further Kent lines, Connex managers showed awareness that lack of corridor access in this stock was a problem, but not of our other security concerns. We were told that designs for refitting the stock were being computer-generated and there would be no actual testing in real life travel conditions by users to assess the impact for pregnant women or those with small children, with bags, cases and push-chairs, or the degree of difficulty for elderly people. Improving access to alarm points appeared to have been given no consideration.

5.4 We find this a startling state of affairs. If the design practices and tests being used are indeed so blind to passengers real-life experience and interests, we believe that their adequacy should be investigated urgently by their funders. There ought not to be public finance for designs that ignore personal security and the needs of a wide range of passengers. Nor should such stock be certified by the Railway Inspectorate as fit for passenger use.

Problems with new Class 375 designs

5.5 We looked specifically at new rolling-stock being brought into service in South East England by Connex and South Central Trains, (though ad hoc journeys made on other operators’ new stock indicated many similar problems). We believe the types of defect we found in the new stock we saw, and the issues these raised, need national consideration and to be put right throughout the whole of the railway fleet.

5.6 Good features of the new stock include the smooth and quiet ride, wide doors with easy pushchair access (though the half step remains a hazard for the unwary) and provision for those in

wheel chairs to travel with dignity. Being new, everything seems clean and bright, with an airy open design and airconditioning. The automatic doors reduce the risk of passengers falling (or being pushed) out.

5.7 However the fittings and layout repeat Networker faults on personal security and passenger needs. Points of particular concern are the reduced number of emergency alarm points, the poor access to them exacerbated by badly designed seating which itself poses other problems, and the risks to personal possessions. We are also concerned about how people might escape from a sealed coach were someone violent or threatening at large.

5.8 The design approach being used, coupled with lack of regulatory oversight, may explain the repetition and aggravation of Networker faults. We heard that some Rail Passenger Council members felt they were being consulted by train companies on train prototypes at a stage when the die had already been cast and only trivial changes were possible. Each train company appeared to be designing its layout independently, with varying individual priorities, including where to require retrofitting to change the basic designs provided by manufacturers.

Loss of emergency alarm points

5.9 Our most pressing concern is the loss of most emergency alarm points – the old “communication cords” – from their traditional easy-to-reach locations above each set of seats. They are now available only at distantly-spaced automatic doors.

5.10 When we walked through new coaches asking passengers where the points were, most had no idea. Typical responses were “*they’re up there aren’t they*” and “*normally I’d look for it up there*” (looking overhead) or “*haven’t a clue*”. It seems that the public have not yet caught up with the removal of a long established safety feature many of us have glanced at from time to time for reassurance when something threatening was happening.

5.11 Nobody could offer us a convincing explanation for the decision to reduce the number of alarm points and to make them more difficult to access. We found arguments about possible misuse, or that modern technology meant there had to be fewer in order for them not to go wrong, quite unacceptable. Cutting them down makes nonsense of current BTP advice to “make sure you know where the emergency alarm is and don’t be afraid to use it”. A problem that faced us during our discussions was the refusal of anyone to accept responsibility for setting standards of internal coach design and access to emergency help.

Poor access and signing of the available alarm points

5.12 We criticised in 1997 the obscure and hard-to-reach location of the emergency call points in Networker stock above the doors where short people could not reach them. New low position points for disabled travellers are locked away from the general public behind covers. The door points are still quite high and tucked away out of sight. As noted in the previous chapter, they are poorly labelled and surrounded by a confusing coloured array of other instructions and warnings.

5.13 Moreover the clutter and small size of written advice around doors is a double disadvantage for those with English as a second language, the poorly sighted and the illiterate. What is needed is something instantly identifiable and understandable, in a standard location.

5.14 A further problem is that the cramped airline seats now proliferating present a new obstacle to people anxious to get help. BTP advises the public that if there is a problem “*Think first about getting away*”, “*If you feel uneasy or uncomfortable then move. Don’t just sit there*”. This is not feasible when:

- high seat backs block sight lines to spot and move away from incipient trouble;
- getting out of the inner seat is at best awkward, and totally impossible if an uncooperative or threatening person occupies the outer one;
- the vulnerable passenger’s dilemma is now hidden by the style of seating from other passengers who might intervene or deter.

5.15 The difficulty in manoeuvring in and out of these seats creates problems for many people, even when not feeling threatened. The design is quite unsuitable where people are getting in and out at various stations in a hurry, particularly when people are standing in the aisles. It poses painful problems for the arthritic, elderly, plump or long of leg (“*mediaeval torture*” said one woman). There is no room to hold a restive young child on one’s lap along with a bag and no room to rearrange rucked garments after sliding across textured seat coverings in a tight space.

5.16 We could not discover any standards or consistent approach on how seating designs are meant to interact with the location decision on emergency call points. Will it be left to the civil courts to deal with the outcome if someone is a serious victim of this piece of bad design?

Risks to personal possessions

5.17 Many people expressed concern about the difficulty of keeping an eye on their possessions. The new stock is rife with invitations to theft. There is no room by the seat to keep anything other than a small bag on one’s lap. The overhead racks are too narrow for anything but a briefcase or coat. They are out of the reach of most short people unless standing on the seat, particularly to retrieve an umbrella. Narrow aisles and standing passengers make the use of space between seats problematical, assuming it exists and the item is small enough to slide in. If baby buggies, bags, rucksacks and sports paraphernalia have to be stowed in the door standing areas, they cannot be watched and are a source of great annoyance to others.

Sealed coaches

5.18 We are concerned that people could be locked into sealed coaches with an unpredictable perpetrator until such time as help arrived. A security officer told us of a case where an assaulted woman had opted not to use the alarm because of the difficulty and delay it might cause for other passengers if help were a very long time arriving. We do not know the solution to this problem other than a greatly speeded response rate. There are some difficult issues here for train companies and the British Transport Police.

Use of CCTV within coaches

5.19 It was averred in some of our national discussions about coach safety that CCTV was the answer to safety problems. Given the variety of approaches, we take leave to doubt this, for the same reasons as we have reservations about how CCTV is being deployed on stations. Indeed as noted

- The Railway Inspectorate should investigate the efficacy of the current virtual-reality design techniques and subsequent testing methods for coach interiors in relation to the needs of all types of user.
- All coaches should be wired to provide emergency alarm points at regular intervals along the interior, readily accessible to passengers. Coach design should allow CCTV cameras immediately to pan onto them, and voice messages to be given.
- Emergency alarm points should have high visibility pictograms in a standard and instantly recognisable form.
- Information and guidance for various purposes throughout the coach should be ranked in its importance and a “standard best layout” adopted.
- Cramped airline-style seats should be redesigned to remove security risks for their users, and to cater for the elderly, pregnant, and those with small children.
- Adequate overhead racks and storage places should be provided where passengers can supervise their possessions and access them easily.
- Standards and management for on-train CCTV and other technology for passenger security should form part of all basic coach design.



CHAPTER 6: TEENAGERS' EXPERIENCES

6.1 This chapter looks at safety from a different angle, namely the experiences of young people who use trains. We have all seen various forms of bad behaviour by young people, ranging from excessive noise and putting feet on seats, to assaults on one another and hooliganism. We have all at some time avoided areas of the platform or the coaches where they have congregated, as part of our own strategies for keeping out of trouble. But as teachers, social workers and family members we also know that teenagers are often victims of others' bad behaviour and that the extent of this is sometimes ignored by railway staff and other passengers.

Survey coverage

6.2 In order to identify these experiences and to assess the effect on those involved, we asked a cross-section of young people, aged mainly between 12 and 18, to fill in a survey form asking :

- have you had a frightening experience over the past year when using trains and if so what happened?
- whom did you tell and did they do anything?
- has it affected your subsequent use of rail?
- do you think anything could be done to make you feel safer on railways in future?

245 completed forms were handed in by local schools and youth groups in Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge, Edenbridge, Cranbrook, Sevenoaks, Maidstone and Eastbourne, 118 by males, 127 by females.

6.3 Nearly a quarter (55) had experienced a frightening incident, but 15 of these were not relevant to our study – mainly closing doors separating them from parents, people jumping off trains early, trains not stopping or going to wrong places. Of the 40 relevant responses (16% of the total), 18 were by females, 22 males. The age spread was as follows:

Age	Responses	Relevant experiences
11 or under	15	1
12	35	8
13	50	9
14	28	7
15	22	7
16	19	2
17	31	3
18 or over	18	3
Not given	27	0
Total	245	40

The findings

(a) What happened

6.4 Of the girls, 4 had been pestered by men, 2 had been threatened by drunk people, 2 had been mugged/robbed, 8 had experienced violence, 1 abuse and 1 unspecified. Of the boys, 5 had been threatened by drunk people, 7 had experienced violence, 7 mugging/robbery and 3 had experienced the same incident of mugging/robbery. 12–15 year olds were the group most affected. Most types of incident were spread evenly among age groups, but drunkenness per se (ie un-associated with violence) was mentioned as a problem only by age 14 and below.

6.5 Typical accounts of what happened were:

“A fight between boys in the carriage where we were”;

“A drunken tramp wouldn't leave me alone. It wasn't VERY frightening, but it made me feel quite uncomfortable and unsafe”;

“A bottle was thrown at a group of me and my friends, then 2 of my friends were punched”;

“I was on the train after a football match and there were loads of drunk lads being quite vicious”;

“A man started punching my friend and then went for me. I got arrested by the police for defending myself”;

“This crazy woman walked through the carriage and started shouting then smacked some boy she didn't know”;

“I was attacked because a man thought I would give him drugs but I didn't have any on me”;

“A man threatened me and said that if I reported him he would push me off the train. He wanted money from me;”

“Some kids tried to mug my friend and they said they were going to knife us”;

“Some people followed me and wanted money off of me so I tried to get away on the train with my friend but they kept pulling me off”;

“This drunk man was raving and shouting”;

“A man tried to nick my mum's money. He said ‘If you do not give me your money I will take your kids’”;

“Me and my lady-friend were approached and her phone was asked for”.

(b) Reporting incidents

6.6 Over a third (15) of the respondents said they told nobody about the incident. In some cases they offered explanations:

“Because they hadn't technically done anything wrong”;

“Lots of men in yellow jackets just walked past and did nothing”;

“I just walked away”;

“I told no-one. She threatened me”;

“They threatened to stab me if I shouted”.

6.7 10 others were either with a parent at the time or told them about it (one said “they didn't believe me”), and 3 said they told friends. Overall only 9 of the incidents were reported to the police,

train staff or a security guard, and apart from one where a man was arrested, there is no indication that any of them was recorded in official statistics.

(c) Effect of the incident on those concerned

6.8 In reply to the question “had it affected their subsequent behaviour” 7 said it had not done so. The other 80% (33) had responded in different ways. Some no longer used trains at all:

“I try to avoid travelling by trains”;

“I’ve never been on the train since”;

“I’ve changed from train to bus”.

Others had modified their behaviour, especially evening travel:

“It made me think about travelling alone at night”;

“I’m more careful at night” ;

“I don’t go to the same station on my own”;

“Now I always sit in a middle carriage that has some people and I try not to travel when its not busy, eg the afternoon”;

“My parents became more wary of me using deserted stations”.

(d) What those affected would like to see changed

6.9 The main suggestions were for more visible police and security guards, particularly at night and that:

“They should be more aware”;

“Easier to find”;

“Put more female guards in place, also more guards in general at night on the trains and on the platforms especially at London stations”;

“Staff walking round the station”.

Several people wanted more CCTV and notices to say so, and one suggested “*easily accessible emergency buttons*”. Several wanted improved lighting on platforms and making sure train lights were working. More gates/fencing were suggested and several people wanted stricter measures to keep drunk people off trains.

(e) What other people thought and said

6.10 One of our survey team had noted at a station she inspected:

“The staff are very concerned about the behaviour of children from the local secondary school when waiting for trains between 3.30 and 4.30 pm. I was informed that the situation is dangerous because they cross the line and are really out of control. Apparently they approached the school and reported the problem but the situation is unchanged.”

6.11 In discussion with railway staff, comments included:

“Kids are a bit of a problem. The trouble is that because of the bad reputation of a few they are all tarred with the same brush;”

“Staff members have been abused orally and physically, spat at. So some of the tolerance levels are not high with some staff;”

“Some teachers want to pretend the problem doesn’t exist. They won’t even allow you to go into the schools to talk about vandalism and safety. All we want to do is work more closely with them. They can’t just wash their hands when pupils walk out of school or college;”

“We take things up with schools, report particular problems and well-known troublemakers. Our revenue officers withdraw the rail passes. But we don’t get any feedback.”

6.12 Suggestions made to us by railway staff included:

- A school teacher travelling on the train is highly effective;
- Students and teachers need to be educated on dangers of the railway via Youth Liaison Officers and police talks at schools. Not all schools are cooperative;
- Feedback was needed on whether the poster campaign on trespass and vandalism run in one area was effective. Some mentioned poor feedback generally:

“They come up with these ideas but we don’t know how they went. Its something kept secret at top level, that is to say if feedback ever happens”;
- The Metropolitan Police had run a scheme where officers in uniform got free travel. That might be repeated with police forces elsewhere.

Overall findings

6.13 Our survey results showed similar patterns to national research about the percentage of young people who are victims as well as perpetrators. 16% had experienced a frightening event over the past year. Yet few told anyone in authority and only one of these events appears likely to have been captured in any official statistics. This is typical of teenagers experiences elsewhere. What the survey additionally cast light on was the effect on their subsequent travel patterns, 80% of them had modified their subsequent use of rail travel in some way, and some of these no longer used rail at all.

6.14 We recommend that:

- Steps should be taken to encourage young people to report bad experiences.
- More high visibility security staff should be deployed on problem trains.
- Greater use should be made of voice announcements on trains where people are misbehaving, as is the case on London Underground.
- Training of railway staff should include detecting and protecting victims as well as tackling perpetrators; and techniques for managing groups of young people.

Continued ➤➤➤

- An award scheme should be set up for staff suggestions on personal security (this might be wider than the teenage group).
- Schools should consider ways of integrating into different parts of the curriculum respect for the railway environment, since this is more likely to have an effect than one-off visits by an outside person.
- The degree of responsibility schools have for the personal safety of pupils after they quit school premises should be clarified, and local education authority training seminars for school governors should include this item.
- There should be better feedback to all staff about initiatives taken and their effectiveness. Rail Passenger Committees should call for regular reports on the effect of initiatives taken, and have an annual discussion of what has been learned.
- The Metropolitan Area free travel scheme for police officers in uniform should be adopted in other areas, with the addition of free travel passes for nominated teachers at “difficult” schools and colleges who undertake to use problem trains.



CHAPTER 7: MAKING THE “QUICK WINS” HAPPEN

The gap in responsibility

7.1 Each journey by rail should at all of its stages enable people to feel secure and unhassled. This will influence whether they will travel anywhere by train in future, and the times of day they are prepared to do so.

7.2 Unfortunately, the railway product is delivered not by one management, but by many, each with its own agenda. Competing companies have different territories and priorities, and basic ownership and responsibilities are split. There is a tortuous set of regulatory arrangements intended to balance public and private interest, operated by various official bodies and parts of the railways business itself, with no ultimate instigator and arbiter. As one official put it:

“There’s no one port of call to go to. It’s a complete and utter nightmare to do anything. We go round and round in a wretched circle and can never get out of it”.

Insofar as there is any national coherence, this is provided in different ways and for different purposes by a single track owner, by national regulation and inspection, and by use of the public purse strings.

7.3 Recent horrendous crashes, and widespread failures to deliver the performance people want, have led to roles being rearranged with a view to making clearer and more coherent who is responsible for the safe running and reliability of trains. OPRAF[#] and a sizeable chunk of the former remit of the Rail Regulator have been absorbed into an invigorated Strategic Rail Authority. Railway Safety has been removed from Railtrack’s domain and awaits reincarnation in the proposed Railway Industry Safety Body. Network Rail, itself a novel sort of arrangement, has just assumed Railtrack’s responsibility for the railway infrastructure. New controls have been introduced, and huge extra sums of public money put on the table.

7.4 Personal security however, and the provisions that affect passengers’ assessment of this, still has been given only a shadowy place in mainstream railway policies. When we tried to establish who was responsible for planning coherently to provide it, we were told it wasn’t important because “it is now recognised as a significant matter by everyone”. We beg to differ. Our findings on stations, coaches, CCTV, signing and information, and young people’s experiences illustrate why.

7.5 Being clear about who is responsible for taking an overview and assessing the best way forward is today more rather than less urgent. Railways have been officially reinstated as a pillar of national transport strategy. Huge public investments and subsidies are being provided or promised. National policies are striving to reduce social exclusion suffered by different parts of the community who lack safe means to get about. Local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships are addressing among other things widespread public concerns about street safety. They are now bringing railway companies into their action plans, since those who misbehave move freely between local authority and railway territories.

[#] *The Office of Passenger Rail Franchising, now abolished.*

7.6 There is no similar national vision and concerted approach to addressing problems that users experience when moving round the railway network itself. Nobody has the job of auditing and setting performance standards for personal safety on stations and rolling-stock, although verbal and physical assaults on staff are receiving more attention. There are helpful initiatives on individual topics such as safer car parks, vandalism (now rebranded as Route Crime) and of course the Secure Stations scheme. Working arrangements have evolved to share information through the Railways Forum, Railways Group and ad hoc seminars. But responsibility for bringing all this together in an effective way, with strategic leadership and plans to deliver results, continues to fall between many stools. As one official put it:

“Everybody has an interest somewhere, nobody is coordinating it in any overall way, nobody wants to. There just isn’t anyone to make things happen”.

Where national responsibility should lie

7.7 Policies for a safer and more inclusive society should not stop at the station entrance. To make things happen and deliver quick wins requires a presiding deity. We considered whom this might be.

7.8 There are several possible candidates.

i. The Department for Transport

are nationally responsible for securing effective organisation and delivery of a safe, accessible national railway system to meet public needs. They give directions and guidance, vet strategic plans, allocate resources and exert influence in many other ways. But they see personal security as a matter for railway management. Departmental oversight and provision of good practice guidance rests with the small Mobility and Inclusion Unit. Excellent though the Unit’s work is, it is basically about awareness-raising and good practice, and is targeted at middle management. It has no power base to drive forward a national framework of action for railways.

ii. Railway Safety

(formerly part of Railtrack) are the “living dead” until their destiny is settled. Their entrenched perspective of safety is in terms of preventing rail crashes, harm to staff, and passenger mishaps. This is reflected in their Railway Safety Plan, the approach to Railway Safety Cases, the Route Crime initiative and their research programme. Poor data collection about passenger experiences and perceptions of safety, together with application of an “equivalent lives” methodology, combine to keep many issues that influence basic travel behaviour marginalised, or indeed invisible.

iii. HM Railway Inspectorate

(now lodged within the Health and Safety Executive) have a similar deep-rooted culture, as their recent annual report amply demonstrates. This bears on how they assess train companies’ Safety Cases. Traditionally a train accident prevention and investigation body, they regard passenger personal security standards as outside their remit and powers, even, as noted earlier, in the case of adequate access to emergency alarms. They are scarcely likely to offer the wide-ranging leadership needed.

iv. The Rail Regulator

is not responsible for personal security, though if a national strategy existed he could wield his powers to foster it (eg through licensing conditions). He is currently overseeing work to define the remit and organisation of the Railway Industry Safety Body recommended by Lord Cullen. “Safety” might be interpreted to include personal security. However, that does not appear to be the intention. Reflecting the reasons why the new body was recommended, current proposals are to incorporate much of Railway Safety at its core and look to the Health and Safety Executive to continue to use traditional regulatory and enforcement instruments. As we have pointed out in a memorandum responding to the ORR consultation document, this arrangement would not change the status quo where personal security is institutionally marginalised.

v. The Strategic Rail Authority

is charged with leadership to bring national coherence into the railway jungle and to deliver a safer, bigger and better system. It has powerful instruments at its disposal, in particular its franchise awards. “SRA are the glue for making things work better, they have the dosh for what replaces things and all the TOCs now have to look to them for this” we were told. They have stated that safety and cost effectiveness are bed-rocks of all they do. How far the personal security of passengers is part of this and how they assess it is not clear.

vi. British Transport Police

are dedicated to providing a safe, orderly railway. Like other police forces their role is enforcement within the system as it exists and they concentrate on criminal offences. Unlike other police forces, their territory threads through the whole of Britain, with all the management and resource problems that entails. While they have much to contribute to and would benefit greatly from a purposeful national personal security strategy, they are not the appropriate body to create one.

7.9 We believe the most appropriate body to provide leadership on all aspects of passenger safety is the Strategic Rail Authority. The Department for Transport should affirm this and reflect it in future guidance and directions. They should also clarify the respective personal safety responsibilities of three other bodies. These are:

- whatever body assumes future responsibility for the Railway Group Standards;
- the Railway Inspectorate; and
- Network Rail (as successor to Railtrack).

The establishment of the proposed new Railway Industry Safety Body to reduce confusion over responsibilities for running trains safely is a unique occasion to put personal safety on an equally robust footing. Doing this could be the first and most important quick win from our findings. Clear responsibility and leadership would help create a safer and better railway system. That would benefit everyone who uses or works on the railways, the companies who run them, and the taxpayers who fund them.

Railway management responsibility

7.10 The second important quick win would be collective agreement by the train operating companies, working with Network Rail, to adopt a system-wide approach to measures known to reduce passengers' safety risks and worries. Companies are individually responsible for ensuring the personal safety of their passengers and some have taken welcome initiatives to improve both security and general environment. What is now needed is a perceivable "national rail product" that is offered right across Britain in a consistent and reassuring way. The Association of Train Operating Companies already has a personal security working group. Its commitment and support will help spread good practice. But the topic urgently needs to move onto the Association's regular main Board agenda, and to be treated there on a wider basis as a key part of national quality management.

7.11 Plans for a concerted approach should cover all the matters discussed in this report, in particular ensuring every station in the country has good basic lighting, a public phone and a help point, familiar standard signs and information presentation, and tracks kept free of garbage. All designs commissioned for coach interiors should meet agreed criteria for personal safety and information location, and should be tested to ensure they match the characteristics of widely differing groups of users. Commitment to delivering all these matters should be key items in National Rail Standards and Passenger Charters.

7.12 We recommend that:

- The Department for Transport should designate the Strategic Rail Authority as the national body responsible for providing strategic leadership to foster passenger personal security across the system as a whole.
- The Department for Transport should clarify where other responsibilities rest for delivering personal security standards within the railway system and in particular access to emergency help within coaches.
- The Association of Train Operating Companies together with Network Rail should agree a "national rail product" approach to making passengers secure and unstressed. They should develop action plans for consistent standards and national quality management as applied to each of the matters discussed in this report, in particular urgent provision of good lighting, help-points and telephones at every station in the system, safe and better fitted coach interiors, standard signing and information, and track cleanliness.
- Commitment to delivering a safe and friendly environment should be included in National Rail Standards and Passenger Charters.



CHAPTER 8: AN AGENDA FOR BRITAIN'S RAILWAYS

This chapter recapitulates all our recommendations for delivering “quick wins” made in this report.

Station improvements (§ 2.8)

- Refurbishment of stations should include management plans for their subsequent maintenance and the prevention of vandalism.
- Plans should be drawn up for a range of schemes as stepping stones to full Secure Stations status and to early improvements everywhere.
- The SRA should actively promote their Rail Passenger Partnership scheme with local authorities and community groups.
- Basic requirements at each station should include good lighting, a telephone and/or help-points, and regular inspections and cleanups.

Station staff on the spot (§ 2.14)

- Increased staff availability should be a key item in franchise awards.
- Efforts should be made to deploy more women as platform staff.
- Failure to observe the hours when stations are advertised as staffed should be treated as a performance failure.
- Better solutions to vandalism than locking passengers out of waiting rooms and toilets should be found.
- All staff, whether railway employees, security staff or police officers, should at all times while on duty wear highly visible uniforms or jackets.
- Windows should use transparent glass and other measures should be taken to help passengers to identify quickly where staff can be found.
- Door signs should be reviewed to ensure they convey the right messages to passengers about accessible staff.

Station responsibility – whom to approach (§ 2.18)

- Every station should be regularly checked to ensure that it is displaying in a prominent place details of the person responsible for its management, and the security officer if different.
- The notice should be clearly captioned, with print of adequate size and with a direct form of wording. Care should be taken not to bury important items of information in a wealth of other material.
- It should encourage people to take up any concerns and should undertake to investigate them and to reply promptly. An objective should be to make travellers

themselves feel active participants in helping the system to run safely and comfortably.

- Details should be given of the area Rail Passengers Committee as a channel for taking up any wider concerns on passenger personal security.
- The company's Passengers Charter should be displayed on every station alongside the "responsibilities" notice; and a Security Policy Statement drawn up.

CCTV (§ 2.31)

- A national CCTV strategy and standards should lay down a framework for the many individual initiatives and publicly-funded investments being undertaken.
- This should also apply to CCTV in coaches.
- The effectiveness and value for money of CCTV in differing railway locations should be carefully researched.
- Close attention should be paid to effective management and maintenance of existing systems.
- There should be linkages between CCTV deployment and public address systems.
- The existence of CCTV surveillance should be more effectively advertised on the spot to raise awareness.
- National guidance should be given to railway staff about whether they should go to the help of a passenger being assaulted or threatened.

BTP/Railtrack Hotline Number (§ 2.37)

- National guidance should require the Rail Crimewatch 40 50 40 poster to be prominently displayed at recommended locations in all stations.
- The number should be prominently incorporated in basic station information displays and other railway literature such as pocket timetables and travel tickets.
- The effects of this should be monitored, including the level of public recognition of the call number.
- BTP response rates to calls should be monitored and published.

Emergency help-points (§ 2.43)

- A readily visible emergency help-point should be provided on every station, and preferably every platform. The system should be easy to use when people are frightened or in the dark.
- Where a sophisticated help-point is being provided, the standard model might be that appearing on London Underground and South West Trains.
- A strategy should be developed to coordinate effective responses to help-points, to 40 50 40 calls, and to incidents captured on CCTV.
- All emergency help-points of whatever type across the railway network should be clearly marked in a standard colour, preferably bright yellow, and with a standard symbol and wording. The same symbols and colours should appear on emergency alarms on trains.

- All help-points should be observable through CCTV.
- Repair of damaged help-points should be a high priority, with performance targets set on response time. This may require daily checks at unstaffed stations.

Safety when leaving stations (§ 2.50)

- A telephone in working order should be provided in a well-lit location at every station, however small. Contracts with telephone companies should require any faults in the apparatus to be immediately repaired.
- Every station should clearly display taxi company numbers in a standard and immediately recognisable notice at the entrance and beside all phones.
- Local taxi firms should be encouraged to locate vehicles at stations and develop other ways of providing a reliable quickly accessed service.
- Good lighting should be installed outside stations preferably associated with locally-linked CCTV.

Track litter (§ 3.10)

- Railtrack and train companies should recognise that track and platform litter both foster a “dirty and unsafe” image with wider impact on local tourism and regeneration.
- All stations with security clearances should reinstate appropriate litter containers.
- Litter prevention and removal should be a key task in the Railtrack Environmental Strategy, with published national performance targets.
- Railtrack and train operating companies should urgently develop a joint management strategy to fulfil their statutory environmental responsibilities on litter.
- Cleaning contracts should be reviewed to increase frequencies to appropriate levels, and performance standards on these checked, with penalties for bad performance.
- Discussions should take place with all retail franchises in stations about the types of litter being generated and a litter minimisation policy should be stipulated.
- Derelict tubs lingering on from defunct floral and “best kept stations” competitions should be removed or preferably regenerated so as to reduce their use as litter bins.
- Station staff should be required to dispose carefully of used tickets.
- Sewage retention tanks should be retrofitted to old rolling-stock, and other measures developed both to prevent track-bed discharges and assist cleaning-up excrement.
- Railway Safety research programme should develop equipment and materials that can be operated safely from platforms to clean track, and to simplify cleansing.
- The ability of platform staff to clear track litter at appropriate stations, subject to proper safeguards, should be clarified by Railway Safety and the Railway Inspectorate.

Signage and information (§ 4.19)

- The Railtrack format should be adopted for colours, fonts and international pictograms for basic signage throughout the railway system, including inside coaches.
- Contracts for provision of local maps throughout the system should be revisited to require basic quality standards and information.
- Research should identify basic principles for appropriate groupings, captions and locations of different categories of information, for national adoption.
- National Station Access Conditions should give a clearer steer about where and how to present obligatory information including security hotlines.
- BTP premises on stations should be more visible and open.
- Ground rules should be established to ensure commercial advertising is not at the expense of passenger information and their sense of security.
- Steps should be taken at national level by regulatory bodies to ensure that safety information appears in standard recognisable forms and locations that avoid confusing and endangering train passengers.

Coach safety (§ 5.23)

- National responsibility for personal security standards in railway coaches should urgently be clarified.
- Basic performance standards should provide for the opportunity to move away from trouble, and a maximum distance of any seat from the nearest emergency alarm, taking account of ease of access. These standards should be applied to retrofits as well as to new stock.
- All provision of public monies for rolling-stock should be dependent on these standards being met.
- The Railway Inspectorate should investigate the efficacy of the current virtual-reality design techniques and subsequent testing methods for coach interiors in relation to the needs of all types of user.
- All coaches should be wired to provide emergency alarm points at regular intervals along the interior, readily accessible to passengers. Coach design should allow CCTV cameras immediately to pan onto them, and voice messages to be given.
- Emergency alarm points should have high visibility pictograms in a standard and instantly recognisable form.
- Information and guidance for various purposes throughout the coach should be ranked in its importance and a “standard best layout” adopted.
- Cramped airline-style seats should be redesigned to remove security risks for their users, and to cater for the elderly, pregnant, and those with small children.
- Adequate overhead racks and storage places should be provided where passengers can supervise their possessions and access them easily.
- Standards and management for on-train CCTV and other technology for passenger security should form part of all basic coach design.

Teenagers' bad experiences (§ 6.14)

- Steps should be taken to encourage young people to report bad experiences.
- More high visibility security staff should be deployed on problem trains.
- Greater use should be made of voice announcements on trains where people are misbehaving, as is the case on London Underground.
- Training of railway staff should include detecting and protecting victims as well as tackling perpetrators; and techniques for managing groups of young people.
- An award scheme should be set up for staff suggestions on personal security (this might be wider than the teenage group).
- Schools should consider ways of integrating into different parts of the curriculum respect for the railway environment since this is more likely to have an effect than one off visits by an outside person.
- The degree of responsibility schools have for the personal safety of pupils after they quit school premises should be clarified, and local education authority training seminars for school governors should include this item.
- There should be better feedback to all staff about initiatives taken and their effectiveness. Rail Passenger Committees should call for regular reports on the effect of initiatives taken, and have an annual discussion of what has been learned.
- The Metropolitan Area free travel scheme for police officers in uniform should be adopted in other areas, with the addition of free travel passes for nominated teachers at “difficult” schools and colleges who undertake to use problem trains.

Responsibilities for action (§ 7.12)

- The Department for Transport should designate the Strategic Rail Authority as the national body responsible for providing strategic leadership to foster passenger personal security across the system as a whole.
- The Department for Transport should clarify where other responsibilities rest for delivering personal security standards within the railway system and in particular access to emergency help within coaches.
- The Association of Train Operating Companies together with Network Rail should agree a “national rail product” approach to making passengers feel secure and unstressed. They should develop action plans for consistent standards and national quality management as applied to each of the matters discussed in this report, in particular urgent provision of good lighting and telephones at every station in the system, safe and better fitted coach interiors, standard signing and information, and track cleanliness.
- Commitment to delivering all of these should be included in National Rail Standards and Passenger Charters.

Annex A: Survey of stations

Stations

62 stations were surveyed:

Barming	Leigh
Bearsted	Lewes
Berwick	Lingfield
Beckenham Junction	London Bridge
Bromley South	Longfield
Brighton	Maidstone East
Burgess Hill	Meopham
Buxted	Normans Bay
Cannon Street	Orpington
Cowden	Otford
Crayford	Paddock Wood
Crystal Palace	Penshurst
Dartford	Pevensy Bay
Dormansland	Pevensy and Westham
Dunton Green	Polegate
East Grinstead	Redhill
Edenbridge	St Pancras
Edenbridge Town	Sevenoaks
Elmers End	Sevenoaks (Bat and Ball)
Farningham Road	Shoreham
Gatwick	Sole Street
Glynde	Staplehurst
Gravesend	Swanley
Hampden Park	Three Bridges
Hassocks	Tonbridge
Haywards Heath	Tunbridge Wells
Headcorn	Uckfield
Hever	Wadhurst
Hollingbourne	Waterloo East
Hove	Waterloo Main Line
Kemsing	Wivelsfield

Survey forms

The forms used are reproduced on the following pages (scaled down slightly to fit). The first form was used for all stations. In addition the “improved/got worse” comparison form was used in those cases where the station had been visited in the 1997 survey.

1. The General Form

UPDATE ON RAIL PROJECT

Club_____Contact person_____

1. CLEAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR PERSONAL SAFETY

Is there a prominent notice on display or other information to say who is responsible for all aspects of safety at this station and around? Yes No

2. VISIBLE AND SUFFICIENT STAFF

Do all staff wear visible uniforms and name badges. Yes No

Are there station photos of them? Yes No

How many station staff are visible? Men Women

At what times is the station unstaffed while passengers are using it

3. WHERE TO REPORT PROBLEMS

Is the new BTP/Railtrack number for reporting vandalism on display in an obvious place? Yes No

Or any other number ditto for help and information Yes No

4. EMERGENCY ACTION

Is there a clearly marked Emergency Help Point? Yes No

How is it marked? words , symbol other

5. QUALITY AND LOCATION OF ON- STATION INFORMATION

Are the following clearly visible? timetables Yes No

general information board Yes No (it may include BTP phone number)

help for disabled travellers, including partly sighted and deaf Yes No

any aspect of security on the station or on the train Yes No

Give details_____

Is basic information crowded out by advertisements, engineering information? Yes No

Do the surroundings/frames/colours of information boards help people sort out the important and the inessential? Yes No

Are station loudspeaker announcements apt and clear? Yes No

6. CCTV FACILITIES

Is there one installed? Yes No

Is it working? Yes No

Is it being continuously monitored? Yes No By whom _____

Does it show clear pictures? Yes No

Are there prominent signs throughout the station saying it is in operation?
Yes No

7. SAFE EGRESS FROM STATIONS

Is there a safe well lighted place to wait for a car, taxi or bus? Yes No

If not briefly describe what it is like _____

Is information shown about calling for a taxi and a telephone Yes No

Is there a safe route to the car park? Yes No

Has railway property been disposed of for “uncomfortable” uses eg
nightclubs? Yes No

*You may like to do the following, (preferably in consultation with local
Disabled Access Group)*

8. PARTLY SIGHTED AND DEAF

Are there induction loops at the booking office? Yes No

Is both visual and aural information provided on the station? Yes No

Are new dot matrix signs easily readable/ at the right height? Yes No

Do the new ticket barriers pose any problems ? Yes No

** If you are able to talk with the safety officer (1 above) please ask*

How does this person ensure all incidents are actually reported,
logged and analysed? _____

What is their wish list to improve safety? _____

Have all their staff received safety training (including for deaf etc)?

Anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for your help.

2. The additional form for revisited stations

UPDATE ON RAIL SAFETY PROJECT (for people who did surveys last time)

Club_____ Contact name_____

Place surveyed in 1997: Station_____

These were the main issues raised last time.

Has anything improved / got worse on the following:

poor condition

bad lighting

poor sightlines

supervision

Has this changed peoples perceptions on rail travel/ station car parks

Who did you ask? What information did you find out?

Would you like to add anything else?

Thank you for your help.

Annex B: Meetings and documents

Meetings

To discuss the issues arising from our surveys, over 30 meetings were held with senior figures in the railway world. In some cases several meetings took place with individual authorities. They included:

Department for Transport
Cabinet Office Social Exclusion Unit

Rail Regulator
Strategic Rail Authority
Health and Safety Executive: HM Railway Inspectorate
British Transport Police

Railway Safety

Railtrack

Connex
South Central
South West Trains
Association of Train Operating Companies

Rail Passengers Council
Rail Passengers Committee for Southern England

Many other discussions were held with staff on the ground and with passengers.

Documents

We are grateful for the many useful annual reports, strategic and business plans, leaflets, discussion papers, research documents, ministerial guidance and publications helpfully recommended or supplied by all the above organisations. We have studied these carefully with a view to developing constructive recommendations and have been grateful for further useful information supplied by letter, telephone and email in answer to our queries.

Caveat

Our discussions all took place on a non-attributable basis. If we have inadvertently misquoted from these or misunderstood any of the documents supplied, we apologise.

Annex C: Track litter case studies

Method used

The pieces of litter on stretches of railway track alongside platforms at four stations of different types were counted, and the most conspicuous individual items logged. These were plastic and polystyrene bottles; cups and their covers; fast-food containers; fruit-drink containers and sandwich holders; and aluminium drink-cans. They were mixed with decomposing paper and foil, plastic bags, discarded tickets and cigarette stubs etc, sometimes coated with oil and excrement, mostly too numerous and intermingled to count individually.

Case study 1

Features:

Busy commuter, tourist and local station with listed buildings. Up and Down platforms located between tunnel entrances. Café on Up platform.

Main items observed:

	Up track	Down track	Total
Drink cans	67	44	111
Plastic/glass bottles	44	48	92
Plastic cups	24	57	81
Plastic cup-lids	13	12	25
Bottle tops	16	12	28
Ribena/juice cartons	5	3	8
Fast food cartons	13	17	30
Drinking straws/stirrers 36		-	36
Cigarette packets	28	4	32
Plastic forks	3	1	4
Discarded tickets	20	12	32
Discarded lighters	12	2	14

There were also over 200 separate pieces of paper, plus many scraps of silver foil, plastic sweet/crisp bags, orange peel and other food remnants, yoghurt pots, innumerable cigarette ends, discarded tickets and quantities of wheel lubricating grease and what appeared to be excrement from the train toilets. A sump where ballasted track switched to concrete track-formation entering a tunnel had trapped a mixture of rain water and rotting items. Unsurprisingly there were signs of nesting rats along the platform drainage pipe outlets. One was seen on the track a few days later.

Although the platform was well swept, bricks, pieces of cable and rubble were piled in a corner at one end, and a rat was also observed amongst this recently.

Inspector's comments:

This busy station, gateway to a tourist town, was swept and well maintained, and almost clear of graffiti (unlike the adjoining station multi-storey car park). However the heavily littered and weedy track-bed created a dirty and neglected look, accentuated by abandoned plant tubs on the platform. Rats were well entrenched.

Case study 2

Features:

Commuter station, quiet during the day. Four tracks and two island platforms.
Café/waiting room on platforms 3 and 4.

Main items observed (counted beside one Up Platform):

Drink cans	13
Plastic/glass bottles	16
Plastic cups	28
Lids	27
Ribena/fruit cartons	6
Fast food boxes	5
Cigarette packets	14
Discarded tickets	9

Inspector's Comments:

The unstaffed stations and track equipment further up the line were smothered in graffiti. However this station was neat and the platforms well swept, as was the café. Track rubbish was the one blot on the otherwise tidy appearance.

Case study 3

Features:

Busy main line station heavily used with 4 tracks. Café between platforms B and C.

Main items observed (counted on 6 coach length of tracks between platforms C and D):

Drink cans	41
Plastic/glass bottles	93
Cup lids	44
Cups	79
Ribena/fruit cartons	12
Fast food boxes	24
Cigarette packets	11
Sandwich packs	12

Inspector's comments:

Much shabbier than adjoining major terminus, with the air of a poor relation. Platforms well swept but heavy litter on the track-bed by the café. Three youths observed throwing their fast food boxes onto the track.

Case Study 4

Features:

Busy junction traversed by three main Connex routes and Eurostar. 6 tracks, 3 through platforms and 1 bay platform (platform 4). Heavily used by commuters, schoolchildren and students, and a wide range of other travellers all day and in the evenings. Cafés on up and down sides.

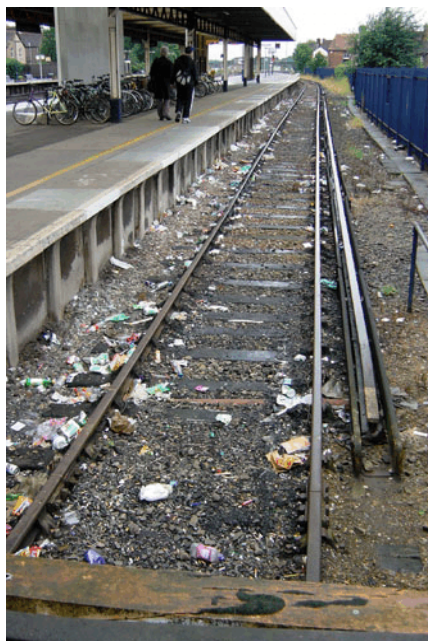
Main items observed:

Litter counted on one through track at platform 2 was broadly similar to Case Study 1, though containing fewer discarded tickets. On the track of bay platform 4 approximately six coaches long however there was a sea of discarded food packaging and other trash that almost hid the sleepers.

Also observed lying around the station available to mischief makers were bags of salt for gritting (in July), pieces of wood, metal, concrete and wire. Two broken windows were seen on platform offices – themselves dingy.

Inspector's comments:

Unbelievable! This station seems to be keeping its platforms clean by running a track garbage dump to cope with items discarded by hordes of munching young people who board local trains. There seems to be a total blind-spot about the relationship between platform and track-bed litter and the importance of dealing with both together. We were told a Eurostar was recently brought to a halt there when a blowing plastic bag entangled its electric shoe.



Annex D: Assessment of Networker Trains,

The following assessment of Networker suburban stock (Classes 465 and 466) was made by a member of the 1996–97 task force. It was included as Annex 4 to that task force's report, *Rail travellers and personal safety: Women's perspectives* (May 1997). The assessment is reproduced here unamended.

Networker Trains: a woman's eye view

- The location of the **communication cord** is such that it cannot be reached from any seat. It is positioned with a call-point to the driver above the entrance doors at a height posing problems for an elderly person with poor balance or a child. Moreover the whole of the main central compartment is left at an unacceptable distance from the call point. The notices as to the location of the communication cords are only over the entry doors, really the last place they need to be. When getting into a train you do not look over the door above your head and equally when getting out your eyes are not focussed there! Moreover if you get as far as the notice it is within inches of the handle itself! Notices are needed in the seating areas alerting people to the locations. Very few people surveyed on commuter trains could say where the communication cord and call point were located.
- The **bus style seats** in particular pose difficulties. Besides woeful leg room, and that it is barely possible to hold your briefcase on your lap, access in and out of the seats is appalling. Every day there is a commotion as someone on the inside tries to get out, when the other person has nowhere to go because of acute overcrowding in the standing area. I refuse to sit on the inside since I was attacked and have to put up with abuse for this regularly, although I always make the first move to let someone in or out. I have seen elderly people and pregnant women or mothers with young children really struggle to climb across. Access to the seats which face each other is marginally better. However, I challenge anyone to get past into the middle seat without disturbing other passengers. The knees of the facing commuters touch regularly and there is insufficient room to twist out of the way.
- There are **insufficient handgrips** in the centre part of the compartment. It is not possible to hold onto the overhead racks unless you are super-tall with long arms. This is particularly so over the 3-seat areas. Every day, there are hammerings on the windows for people to move down, but with nowhere to hang onto there is an understandable reluctance to do so.
- The **central aisle** between the two sides of seats is far too narrow. It is actually almost impossible to walk down the aisle with a handbag on your shoulder and a briefcase without clouting someone. Similarly someone standing near to you inevitably ends up with a handbag/umbrella/book/newspaper against you or even worse unintentionally pulling your hair! The narrowness compounds the reluctance to move down for fear that you will not be able to get back in time to get out, causing increased overcrowding around the doors. Daily at London Bridge there is a marked increase in tensions and tempers as people fight to get

off the train, whilst others try to stay upright in the melee. There are simply too few entry points for the numbers travelling on commuter trains.

- The overall layout has major shortcomings. When there are extra technical difficulties being faced the whole process of travelling safely becomes impossible. At least once a fortnight I am in a train where **the doors will not shut or worse will not open**. Frequently tempers get short and there was one occasion when there was a fight in the carriage at London Bridge when the doors jammed and people had to try to get out via the other exit. Earlier in 1996 when the Networkers had the coupling problem it was impossible to get from one carriage to another. Even now sometimes the links do not work.
- The **number of carriages** is always a lottery. This has improved with Connex S.E. but the number of short trains is still too high. It simply makes the overcrowding and safety angles worse. It would help at least for the number of carriages to be shown on the electronic boards ... at least you would know where to stand for the arriving train, or where to try to get in at a terminus so as to have the best possible ride in the circumstances. Everyone understands there are sometimes problems, but goodwill is abused and leaves a sour feeling when the train on the next platform is 12 carriages and yours is just 4! At London Bridge when the train arrives short there is frequently a stampede back down the platform which is dangerous for others waiting for their train, and often people get left behind when they cannot physically get into one of the first two compartments in time. No matter when it happens the congestion around the doors slows down the time spent in stations and causes tempers to rise.
- There is insufficient room for **luggage**. A case is a nightmare to transport in the rush hour. Really the only place to sit with it is on one of the few twin seats which are located immediately behind a three seater, so that there is space for the case on the floor. Those who come to stand get disgruntled and of course if the person on the inside needs to get out it is a terrible performance.
- The **overhead racks** are not deep enough. They are at an angle and people often cannot reach to retrieve things like an umbrella that has slid down, Additionally, as there is not enough clearance to the roof, items overhang and indeed sometimes fall out. There are two primary reasons for the things falling. Firstly the stretch is often too great for people to retrieve things safely, and secondly items placed over the brackets in the rack lean forwards out of the rack and easily become dislodged.
- The **windows** are difficult to open, even for those without arthritis, and this is made worse by the angle available to you to work from. Enough people feel faint in the crowds, the heat just makes it worse, especially if you are standing for longer than expected.
- The **half step** that greets you at the doorway is dangerous as it is not wide enough for a foot. Somehow people getting on cope better, but getting off with a tide of travellers pushing from behind is hazardous. I have seen twisted ankles, falls, broken shoe heels and even one broken walking stick caught in the hole with its owner flat on the platform. The step is often just not seen.

- There is very little room for anyone in a **wheelchair** to sit other than where the only case space is. I know wheelchair users tend to avoid the rush hour, but why should they? A frequent sight is a working mum taking the youngster on the train to the work crèche. The lack of space is a real problem and understandably the child feels hemmed in and often crying or a temper tantrum results. Commuters lean over the pushchair to create space and the language when the poor lady wants to get off is far from choice!

Recommendations

- *Transparent stickers, like those for 'no smoking' to be placed on the windows indicating that the communication cord is above the door.*
- *Station screens to indicate the number of carriages so travellers know where to stand.*
- *Publicity posters to be placed in carriages creating awareness for the British Transport Police and what action to take if you are involved in, or a witness to an incident. Also information on train evacuation procedures in the event of fire.*
- *When there is a refurbishment of the Networker we recommend use of more colour on handgrips, a yellow line marking the edge of the half step.*
- *Future rolling-stock releases should have wider central aisles and a grip on the top of every seat, have more room around the door, easy clip window fittings and an advertised space for those travelling with large luggage, a pushchair or a wheelchair.*