

rail safety update

NEWS AND UPDATES FOR THE RAIL
INDUSTRY AND SAFETY ASSESSORS



NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY
WAKA KOTAHĪ

August 2012

Rail Safety Week: 13-19 August

www.railsafety.co.nz

USE YOUR BRAIN - TRACKS ARE FOR TRAINS

Drug and alcohol policy and procedure

It is pleasing to see a number of you, as licence holders, are reviewing your safety cases, especially in relation to drug and alcohol, or fitness for duty, aspects.

This is happening for a variety of reasons, for example as part of a general management review or because of an increase in scope of the operation. Often this results in a safety case variation request being submitted to the NZTA as you look to strengthen this aspect of your safety case. We would however like to take this opportunity to remind you that a change to the safety case must be supported by documents and procedures at the safety system and procedure levels also.

For example, say you want to introduce random drug and alcohol testing at your organisation. It is not enough to simply say you will do this in your safety case. Such a position needs to be supported by procedures that fully describe how the random testing will be determined; what the chain of custody procedures are; how you have agreed this with employees or volunteers; your management procedures for positive test results; who is going to manage the testing regime and the necessary relationship with medical professionals, and so on.

We certainly do not wish to discourage you (in fact we strongly encourage reviews and improvements) from implementing effective drug and alcohol or fatigue management regimes, but draw your attention to the necessary supporting mechanisms that go with the high level descriptions contained in the safety case. As we all know "the devil is in the detail" and you need to be able to demonstrate to the NZTA, a safety assessor or other regulatory body that you have a robust defensible safety management system in place with appropriate protocols surrounding the likes of drug and alcohol matters.



Manager Rail Systems

After a short secondment I have returned to the Rail Team as the Manager Rail Systems. Although delighted to be back in the 'rail hot seat', I must say I did enjoy my secondment to the Disadvantaged Novice Driver project.

The experience has given me an advanced understanding about project management within the Government sector. I am keen to take these learning's and apply them where applicable to the rail industry.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of both Rob Gould and the Rail Systems Team during my absence. Rob who was handed the baton as Acting Manager during my secondment did a fantastic job in keeping things running and addressed a number of significant rail related issues.

Equally, I am grateful to all of the Rail Systems Team who all teamed up and took on extra responsibilities during my absence.

Now that I have returned to the 'hot seat', please feel free to contact me at any time. My details are listed at the end of this newsletter.

John Freeman

Steam Incorporated - 40 years in the rail industry

The Rail Systems Team would like to congratulate Steam Inc. on achieving the 40 year milestone as a railway heritage society.

The society has come a long way since 1972, from being set up to repair heritage steam locomotives to the professionally run rail organisation we see today, which includes the restoration of both steam and diesel locomotives, restoration of ex-NZR carriage rolling stock and the running of charter trains with your own on board crew.

Well done Steam Inc., you are an encouragement to all other railway heritage societies.



Safety Assessor seminars

Following on from the success of the industry seminars we ran last year, the NZTA is running another series later this year, but this time just for our appointed safety assessors.

By now all our safety assessors will have received an email from Rob with details of the dates and venues, and an outline of the topics we will be covering. The seminars are scheduled for 4-12 October and are an opportunity for the NZTA to discuss some specific requirements of the safety assessor's role with them face to face.

Rail licence holders will not see any significant difference following these seminars, although you may notice some adjustments to process by the safety assessor compared with your last interaction.

The NZTA is not proposing any fundamental changes to the safety assessment process, but we will be working with our safety assessors in the spirit of continuous improvement to enhance the benefits of this important part of the regulator's monitoring functions.

Fumes/ exhaust danger

Just a reminder all organisations should take care before starting any equipment or locomotives that emit fumes in enclosed spaces such as loco sheds.

Adequate ventilation should always be ensured before start up. Dangerous fumes and gases can be undetectable and do severe damage that may not be apparent until it is too late.

This warning follows several incidents on overseas railways that have resulted in serious consequences for employees and/or volunteers.



In memorium: Don Finch

The NZTA's Rail Systems Team is mourning the death of rail assessor Don Finch.

The connection between Don and the NZTA Rail Systems Team goes back to 1994 when the LTSA approved Don as one of six Telarc auditors to conduct rail safety assessments.

Initially Don was part of the Telarc team that conducted the combined Rail Safety and ISO9001/2 (Quality) audits of Tranz Rail Limited. This was a particularly interesting time as all organisations involved were learning the best way to apply the audit process to the Transport Services Licensing Act and how that could best enhance the continuous improvement of rail safety throughout New Zealand.

In recent years, Don shifted his focus from the assessment of the larger rail operators to tourist operators and the industrial sidings in the Waikato. However, he maintained a key role in managing the relationship between Telarc (who continue to assess KiwiRail, Veolia and a number of industrial sidings) and the NZTA.

It is fair to say, that while Don had a unique audit style, he never fell short of his passion for the health, safety and well being of participants in the rail industry.

Don Finch passed away in his sleep on 12 June 2012.

Correspondence to the NZTA

These days, all correspondence is filed in an electronic storage system here at the NZTA, so sending your letters, files or reports electronically saves us a bit of time.

Please send all of your electronic correspondence to your client manager and please 'cc' our Rail Systems Manager - john.freeman@nzta.govt.nz. However, if electronic mail is not available for your organisation 'snail mail' will still be answered!



Our contact details

For general enquiries or contact information about the NZTA please check our website www.nzta.govt.nz or email us at info@nzta.govt.nz

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The Rail Systems team is located on level 3
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Rail Safety Notification Hotline

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