



The Chronicle



Issue 12

April 2010

SOUTHERN DRIVERS
COMPANY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER.

Reporting Incidents.

On the 11th February 2010 we had another incident of 2 trains in an absolute block section between Bexhill and Pevensey. This is the second time this has happened at this location in 3 years. Shortly after the first incident in 2007 a colleague had a disputed SPAD at Seaford during this investigation there were some questions raised concerning the signallers actions. All of these incidents raised concerns for us over the quality of the training and management of the signallers on the East Coast. We then recently inadvertently learned of another incident on the Newhaven to Seaford branch where a driver was advised to pass a signal at danger by a signaller. The movement was supposed to proceed off of the single line and into the up platform of the station where the train was booked to call. However, the points controlling the movement from the single line to the up platform had not returned to the correct position following the trains' journey to Seaford and the train travelled into the down platform where another train was stopped and awaiting for the signal to clear. The train travelling in the up direction stopped short of the stationary train.

This latest incident occurred in September 2009 and was not reported to any Representatives. When we reported at the Branch meeting of the members involved in the incident, their Health and Safety representative expressed his concerns as he had not been advised of the incident either. Whilst the drivers concerned had clearly carried out their duties by filling in a drivers report form by not then leaving a copy for their representatives or actually contacting their representatives a very serious incident has taken place and not one representative was aware of it. It may be one incident for a driver but clearly we and your representatives often have a view of a bigger picture and clearly all of these incidents paint a very big picture that we are trying to deal with. If anyone is involved in any incident that could have potential to cause harm, they should Report it to their Health and Safety Representative as soon as possible.

Sharing in Success Scheme.

Southern recently announced their intention to replace the Christmas bonus payment with a sharing in success scheme. The basis of the scheme is detailed in the 2010 Spring edition of Southern Life. This is a profit driven scheme which concentrates on customer satisfaction and performance. The payments staff receive in December each year will be based on money from the incentive pot.

We have grave concerns that this is sending the wrong message that performance is a priority over safety, something Southern are denying.

Safety must be paramount and we have reminded Southern on a number of occasions of one of the recommendations from the Inquiry into the 1988 Clapham disaster (Hidden 50).

" BR shall ensure that the organisational framework exists to prevent commercial considerations of a business-led railway from compromising safety."

Also, Lord's Cullen and Uff referred to *"the noise about performance drowned out the noise about safety"* from their Inquiry into the Ladbroke Grove accident.

Although Southern are at liberty to introduce incentive schemes, we feel all members should be aware of potential risks that could be associated with taking shortcuts or rushing.