

Rail Plant Association Update

RPA Acting-Chairperson Paul Helks reports on the current initiatives of the association for road/rail plant owners.

Standards update

Following the withdrawal of the Quarterly PT&RS Standard Briefing Report announced in November 2022, access to the information contained in the report must now be gathered from the primary source. To assist with this, links to the respective information sources for each area are as follows:

- Network Rail standard briefing report: https://global.ihs.com/csf_home.cfm?&csf=NR
- Rail Group Standards: <https://www.rssb.co.uk/en/standards>
- RSSB news: <https://www.rssb.co.uk/en/what-we-do/insights-and-news/news>
- BSI standards updates: <https://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/our-services/bsi-membership/update-standards-magazine-registration/>
- UIC Documents: <https://uic.org/>

Fitter competence material

Work continues on the Rail Plant Association (RPA) material to complement the assessments. Dave Turner of DAT Training is making great progress with members from the RPA Management Committee. Stay tuned for more on this matter in due course.

Electrical safety step-up

Take a moment to visit Safety Central and follow the link for electrical safety step-up. The electrical safety step-up is one part of the electrical safety culture strategy and framework describing the ambitions to address cultural change and recommendations from electrical incidents. It also aligns to the wider Network



Collective Mark

Rail culture framework, which is committed to improving our electrical safety culture across the industry, and is the foundation for embedding changes to ways of working.

There are a number of films and guidance to help our workforce stay safe when working in proximity to high-voltage systems. But, for me, the most powerful message is delivered by Bryant Latham. Bryant tells his story of being electrocuted whilst working on OHLE. The massive impact that it had on his life and family. He talks openly about how our behaviours and actions have an impact on our



Paul Helks, Acting-Chairperson, RPA.

overall safety, and to make sure everyone goes home safe every day. For more, please visit: <https://safety.networkrail.co.uk/safety/electrical-safety/electrical-safety-culture/electrical-safety-step-up/>

RPA 2023 AGM

The RPA AGM will be held on 1st March at the usual location of the Nuthurst Grange Hotel, Hockley Heath. For more information on this event, or any RPA-related matters, please contact me direct at: phehks@apwebbplanthire.co.uk or the RPA's website: <https://www.cpa.uk.net/special-interest-groups/rail-plant-association-rpa>

Steve Featherstone update

In the last issue of *Rail Infrastructure*, I wrote about the concerns of the rail plant community in regards to providing resources for the peak demand at Christmas. Network Rail responded by making machine operators and machine controllers into named resources as part of its Delivering Work Within Possessions (DWWP) process. This brought them into line with overhead line resources and signal testers. My thanks to Tom Male and his DWWP team for their swift response.

In the event, it all proved an unnecessary exercise. The RMT strike action caused so much work to be cancelled that it took the heat out of the market for contingent resources to such an extent we ended up with a significant surplus of both plant and resources to operate and control them. The RMT strike action continued a theme of late cancellations with the plant supply chain unable to find alternative ways to deploy both the machines and the resources.

Since the start of the RMT strike action, over £20 million of work for the plant supply chain has been cancelled at short notice. Under the terms of the plant hire contracts, responsibility for short notice cancellations sits with the supply chain unless it is cancelled within a day of the booked shift when responsibility moves to the client. Of course, clients are smart and they know exactly when they need to cancel

the resources so that they incur no liability.

The financial impact of the RMT strike action is now greater than when Carillion went into administration. However, because of its drip, drip nature, it has not attracted the same level of interest. It has, however, clearly shown that the current plant hire terms and conditions are no longer fit for purpose.

The history of the RPA standard terms and conditions for plant hire goes right back to the introduction of road/rail plant. An addendum was produced to the CPA terms and conditions and these have existed pretty much unchanged since then.

Even without the impact of the RMT strike action, the RPA standard terms and conditions were long overdue a complete refresh to make them into a standalone document, which can be easily contractualised by both clients and plant providers. The savings in commercial and legal fees going forward make this a very worthwhile exercise for the whole railway community.

The RPA has asked me to independently chair a review and rewrite of the RPA standard terms and conditions. I am keen that this is done with the involvement of both Network Rail and the principal contractors. At the RPA meeting on 30th November 2022, I asked for nominations and the response was very good. The first meeting was on 25th January where we agreed the scope and programme for the review. The target is to

have the final version of the new standard terms and conditions ready for sign off at the RPA AGM in early 2024, which will involve the plant providers, principal contractors and Network Rail. This gives us a year to work through all of the issues and agree all of the detail. If anyone reading this feels that they could add value to the process and would like to be part of it, then please let Adam Godwin at the RPA know and we will get you involved. Please email Adam on: rpa@cpa.uk.net. I will keep you posted on how we progress in future issues of *Rail Infrastructure*.



Steve Featherstone, RPA Consultant.