



ASLEF's Response to the BIS Consultation on Land Transport Cyber Security
(Rail) – January 2015

The Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) is the UK's largest train driver's union representing more than 20,000 members in train operating companies and freight companies as well as London Underground and light rail systems.

ASLEF recognises that this report is aimed at rolling stock and infrastructure owners and operators, manufacturers, suppliers and contractors and therefore is limited in what the union will say.

The safety and security of our members and the traveling public are of course paramount to ASLEF. In an age where more and more tasks are being undertaken by computers and through networks, cyber security becomes an even bigger issue. It is for this reason that we must always ensure that it is people, and not computers that have ultimate control in safety critical roles. The threat from cyber-attacks is one of the reasons why ASLEF vehemently opposes the concept of "driverless trains", both on the mainline and on London Underground. Technology should always support and assist staff. It must never lead to situations where people do not have the ultimate say in terms of safe operation of public transport.

ASLEF welcomes the guidance on cyber security. We are aware of the issue, which has been discussed at the RSSB System Safety Risk Group (SSRG), to which ASLEF sends a representative.

Updates to SSRG have recently been made on “Addressing Cyber Security Risk” and “Cyber Security for Technical Systems” from the RSSB High Integrity Software Group (HISG).

Another issue which has to be considered is the current lack of suitable and safe global navigation satellite systems (GNSS). The most common GNSS is the USA’s GPS. However, the EU did not want GPS to be used to control rail, as the US reserve the right to turn off GPS. This would clearly be far too risky for rail within Europe. The same applies for the Russian system, GLONASS.

Technology must be embraced if it makes the way we operate more efficient. But this must never be to the detriment of safety. ASLEF is glad that the BIS are looking into the issue of cyber security of rail and hope that along with the DfT, it gives greater consideration to the risks associated with transfer of responsibilities from humans to computers in the running of our railways.

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