



Transport Committee Enquiry – Land Transport Security – January 2013

1. The Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) is the UK's largest train drivers' union representing approximately 18,000 members in train operating companies and freight companies as well as London Underground and light rail systems.
2. ASLEF welcomes this opportunity to give evidence to the Transport Committee regarding security. The security of employees and passengers should be an ongoing priority for every stakeholder in the transport industry. There are always ways to improve security and it is important that these issues are constantly considered and kept under review
3. The union has two main concerns with regard to security in the rail industry at present. Firstly, there is the problem of trains not being fully checked before they go to depot which can lead to passengers being over-carried and can allow significant breaches of security. Secondly, there is a lack of standard identification for access to "airside" areas on the railway which can lead to safety issues and potentially lead to dangerous security breaches.
4. It is self-evident that following the termination of a train, all passengers must disembark for security reasons. This has previously been ensured by a member of staff walking through the train to check that all passengers had disembarked. However as the number of station staff decreases, such steps inevitably occur less frequently. This can lead to a great number of security risks. A good example of this is the Bakerloo Line on London

Underground where following the removal of detrainment staff at the end of 2011, incidence of 'passenger overcarry' increased enormously. In fact, in 2010/11 there were 9 such incidents rising dramatically to 1053 in 2011/12. While this figure appears to be dropping down from this peak, it remains far high than previous years before these staff were removed. This has already led to one train operator assault. ASLEF believes that without action it is only a matter of time before there is another incident.

5. Trains which have been in use will usually be sent to depot or occasionally remain in station overnight. There are obvious security risks that derive from any passengers being left in these areas. This could be intentional, with the potential threat of deliberate sabotage, or an accident with a member of the public falling asleep or being incapacitated which may create a health hazard to themselves or others.
6. ASLEF believes that over carrying remains one of the key potential security risks on the railway. The problem can be resolved by undertaking more staff checks.
7. The other key potential risk in relation to security is the lack of central identification for railway staff. ASLEF believes that a standard central database should be kept and identification should be issued for all staff that have access to non-public areas on the railway. Currently staff receive identification from only their employer so station checks can therefore involve all manner of TOCs or Network Rail with the result that it can prove difficult to check which staff have got the right to be in certain areas. Such fragmented security arrangements would be completely unacceptable in airports, yet there is the same potential for serious damage and loss of life on the railway. Whilst many staff are required to have various police security checks to get jobs, this is of little use if these individuals are difficult to identify.

8. The overall security situation on the network is another example of the consequences of a fragmented railway. The union believes that a standardised badge containing relevant information for all railway staff would make identifying those who are in areas to which they should not have access far easier. These passes could have additional benefits. For example they could contain details of the travel facilities that staff have. This would cut down on the costs of administering staff travel.
  
9. We are living in an era where security measures have to be increasingly considered. Travel by rail is already one of the safest forms of transport available. We must ensure this continues to be the case with rail authorities knowing exactly who has access to what operational areas at stations and depots and ensuring that those who should not have access are not able to slip through the net. Relatively minor changes such as more vigorous checks to trains following their final destination and a centralised security pass could have the effect of saving lives as well as ensuring that confidence in rail travel remains high. Such changes would therefore be a small price to pay.

Mick Whelan  
General Secretary  
ASLEF  
77 St John Street  
London  
EC1M 4NN