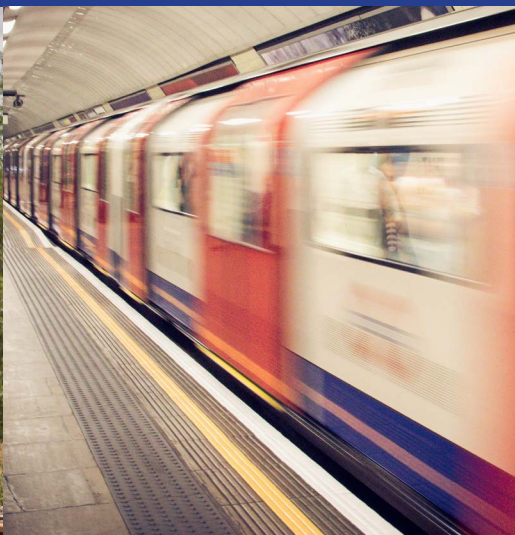


# Frontline *Matters*

ISSUE 1 Jan - Mar 2018



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# Editor's note

Welcome to what was previously known as 'The CIRAS Newsletter' - renamed 'Frontline Matters'.

We've been thinking long and hard about how best to reach frontline staff with the health and safety issues that you think matter most.

The content, examples of reports and articles for this issue have all been put together with this in mind.

Our readers are mostly frontline staff – in other words, people like you who work at the coalface, some with critical safety roles in the transport industry and in the construction industry too.

You can participate in the shaping of this magazine by telling us what you think of it.

We are listening and want to engage with you as much as we can.

We know we can count on your constructive feedback to ensure continuous improvement.

A new video called 'Prevent incidents in confidence' has been launched to explain how you can report quickly and easily to ourselves, if you ever need to.

We encourage you to use internal reporting channels wherever possible, but know, in reality, people often don't report for a variety of reasons.

Page 3 leads with an article about the different views frontline staff and managers have about their safety culture.

It begs the question of whether it is possible to have a strong, positive safety culture if perceptions vary so much. Closing the gap will depend on open dialogue and effective communication.



Your voice on health and safety really matters and we want that message to reach as many as possible.

Remember to speak up if you need to.

You can do so in total confidence by using CIRAS if all else fails.

Enjoy reading this issue and please send any comments and feedback to [editor@ciras.org.uk](mailto:editor@ciras.org.uk)

## Word from the frontline

Here are a selection of comments from people who have made reports telling us why they came to CIRAS

"I was just too afraid to report internally. Management are not very approachable."

"20 other drivers have raised this concern. I've reported it several times to my manager, but this has proved ineffective."

"I haven't told anyone I'm reporting this. My reporting system is not effective."

"I don't want my company to lose their contract but I'm worried about safety."

"This concern has been passed around, and there is still no joy in it being rectified. The next step is to go to CIRAS and give them a nudge."

"I was worried that if I reported internally, there would be repercussions."

"I'm frustrated. I've raised this with my health and safety manager, but nothing's been done."



# Are managers and frontline staff from different galaxies?

Our online survey revealed differences in the way managers and frontline staff think about safety and reporting culture

Photo by Ben Rosett on Unsplash



CIRAS recently devised a 90-second online survey on safety and reporting culture.

We had well over a thousand participants in total, a big thank you to all those who completed the survey!

Over half (53 per cent) had more than 10 years' experience in the transport industry.

**"80 per cent of the managers said they got good feedback when reporting a safety concern. Just 33 per cent of those in frontline roles thought the same."**

The mixture of frontline staff and managers came from a variety of different transport sectors – passenger rail, freight, Network Rail, London Underground, supply chain and bus.

Participants had a good understanding of their own responsibility for reporting safety concerns – what, when and how.

Participants were asked if they were clear on what safety issues could be reported, and if they were confident about reporting an unsafe act.

More than 80 per cent of all participants agreed on these two measures.

## **Different worlds**

You might be forgiven for thinking managers and frontline staff come from different worlds. 80 per cent of the managers said they got good feedback when reporting a safety concern.

Just 33 per cent of those in frontline roles thought the same.

It is hard to believe their perceptions could vary so much (see Chart 1 overleaf).

When asked whether health and safety concerns were taken seriously, 88 per cent of the managers believed that was in fact the case, as opposed to just 41 per cent of frontline staff.

Managers and frontline staff may talk to each other, but whether the managers are really listening and responding to feedback is an entirely different matter.

Frontline staff experience the reality of reporting systems as end users so their feedback is critical.

If a trusting atmosphere prevails and managers and frontline staff can listen to each other, this feedback can be acted upon to ensure reporting systems can be improved.

CIRAS reports show that different interpretations between managers and frontline staff can result in unsafe practices.

### Gaining trust

James Reason (1997) is a Professor of Psychology and a Human Factors expert. Reason highlighted how reporting and safety culture are closely linked.

Reporting culture is one of the cornerstones of safety culture in his thinking – it helps organisations learn and become safer.

Trust between frontline staff and managers is critical for creating a strong, positive reporting culture, according to Reason.

These are the questions he says are on people's minds when they are considering making a report:

**“...confidential reporting is there to complement internal reporting to guard against the loss of important information.”**

- Will management act on the information?
- Is it worth the effort if no good is likely to come from it?
- Will I get my colleagues into trouble?
- Will I get into trouble?

There will always be a role for confidential reporting to capture health and safety issues that otherwise might not get reported.

We can never be 100 per cent certain an internal reporting system will capture everything of value.

If an organisation welcomes confidential reports where the need arises, staff are often reassured by the openness and maturity on display.

Greater trust is generated in the process.

Ultimately, the acceptance of confidential reporting can drive improvements in internal reporting. If you know that your managers are really listening, you will be far more likely to report things to them in future.

Confidential reporting is there to complement internal reporting to

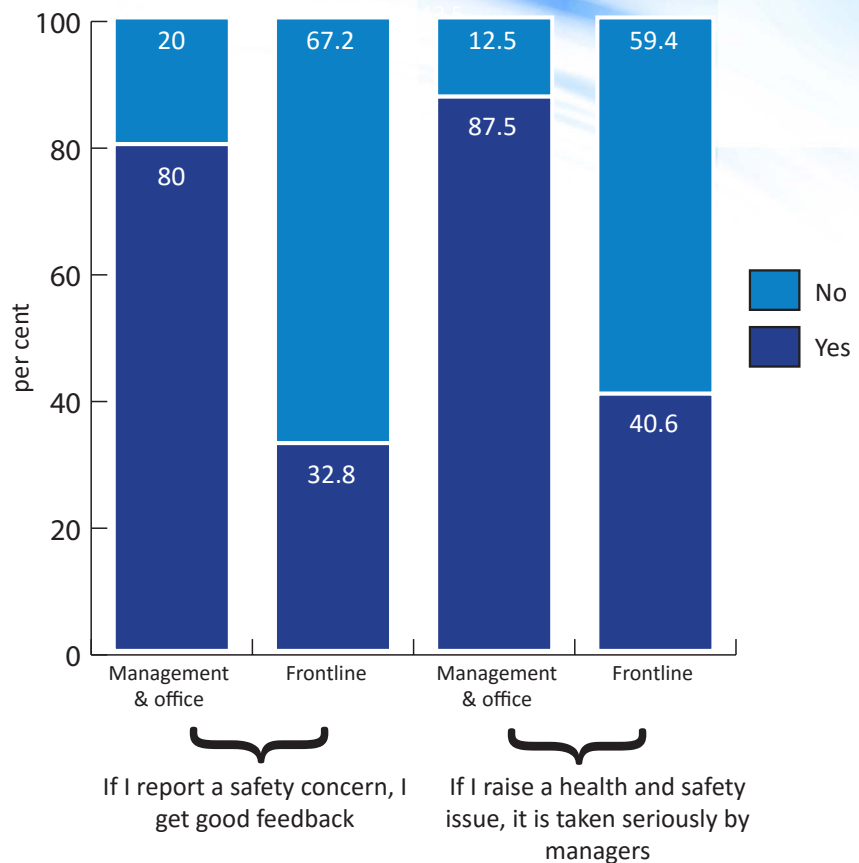


Chart 1: Reporting feedback and being taken seriously by managers

guard against the loss of important information.

**“We can never be a 100 per cent certain an internal reporting system will capture everything of value.”**

### References

Reason, J. (1997). *Managing the Risks or Organizational Accidents*. Ashgate: Abingdon



Photo by rawpixel.com on Unsplash



# Vacancies filled and communications improve at control centre

Staff shortages had been causing fatigue, increasing the likelihood of an incident



Photo by Mike Enerio on Unsplash

## Concern

A reporter was concerned that staff shortages at a control centre were impacting on workload, with potential safety consequences for the railway.

The reporter was concerned there should have been cover when a controller went on a break.

**“Some controllers were working a 12-hour shift with a limited break...”**

If cover was not available, a manager would normally stand in. But the reporter believed that some managers were not competent to take over the role.

Some controllers were working a 12-hour shift with a limited break, or none at all, leading to fatigue, and a potential safety incident.

Managers were also covering safety critical roles but the reporter said they did not possess the local knowledge required.

Having knowledge of the local area forms a key part of being able to respond quickly if there is an incident.

### Actions requested

- Could all employees be appropriately trained for the role they are undertaking?
- Could all employees receive sufficient breaks to reduce fatigue?
- Could the vacancies be filled?

## Response

A communications assessment identified some areas for improvement.

An action was placed on management to better learn their areas of control and cover them effectively.

This will also help identify panel breakdowns better, and aid more streamlined communications.

Whilst the risks of fatigue are taken very seriously, it was admitted that sometimes, due to operational constraints, they were unable to provide a break to staff.

On these rare occasions breaks must be taken around service requirements.

All vacancies have now been filled at the control centre in question. A further four posts have now been created to help manage the shortages.

Even with a full complement of staff there are currently not enough positions to cover the post.

There is also a risk attached to the long lead time in getting people trained up as fully competent.

It is recognised that proactive recruitment is necessary in the future to ease such situations.

### Put it into practice!

If you are concerned about the impact of fatigue on safe working conditions, report it. Having local knowledge can be critical in situations that require an immediate response. This is also very worthy of being reported.

# Safety of dispatch improved after visibility issues

Incorrect equipment was being used and rules were being compromised

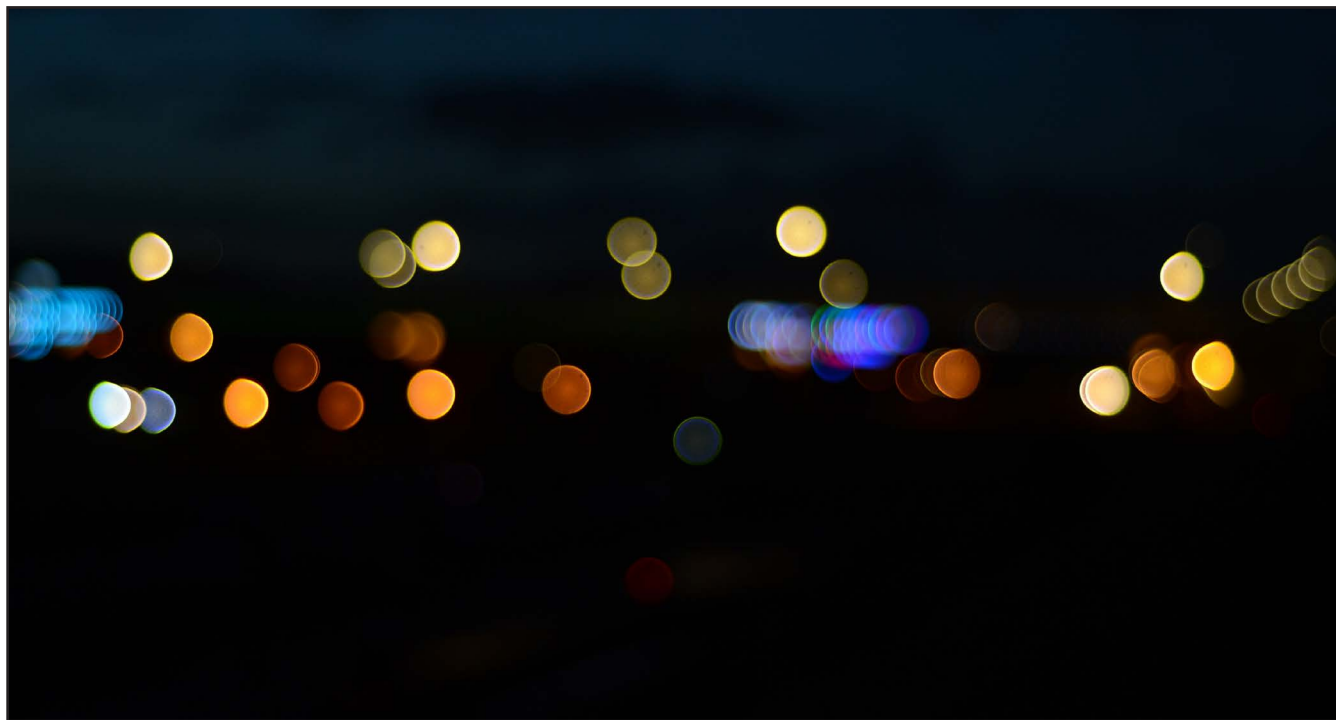


Photo by Light Liu on Unsplash

## Concern

A concern was raised regarding the use of incorrect equipment during dispatch procedures by staff at a group of train operating company (TOC) stations.

**“The use of incorrect equipment was occurring daily at all locations concerned...”**

At the three locations concerned, dispatch batons rather than dispatch lamps were being used which did not make the staff visible enough during the hours of darkness and when positioned at the opposite end of the train to the driver.

The staff at all locations were using batons as no lamps had been provided.

The use of incorrect equipment was occurring daily at all locations concerned and potentially compromising train dispatch safety procedures.

## Action requested:

- Clarify what is the correct equipment to use and the procedure to follow when dispatching trains during dark hours
- If a lamp needs to be used, ensure all employees are equipped with them and use them

## Response

It was confirmed that the dispatch procedure was not being correctly applied and that the incorrect equipment was being used.

Dispatch batons should not have been used, only dispatch lamps.

**“Immediately the right equipment was sourced and stock levels replenished.”**

An investigation was undertaken by operational management and it was identified that the correct equipment was broken or missing so had not been provided.

The defects and train dispatch procedure were not being adhered to by management at these locations.

**“...staff at all three locations now have the correct equipment...”**

This resulted in the staff being asked to compromise rules and procedures and undertake potential unsafe practices daily.

Immediately, the right equipment was sourced and stock levels replenished.

The staff at all three locations now have the correct dispatch lamps, so that the correct train dispatch procedure can be applied.

## Put it into practice!

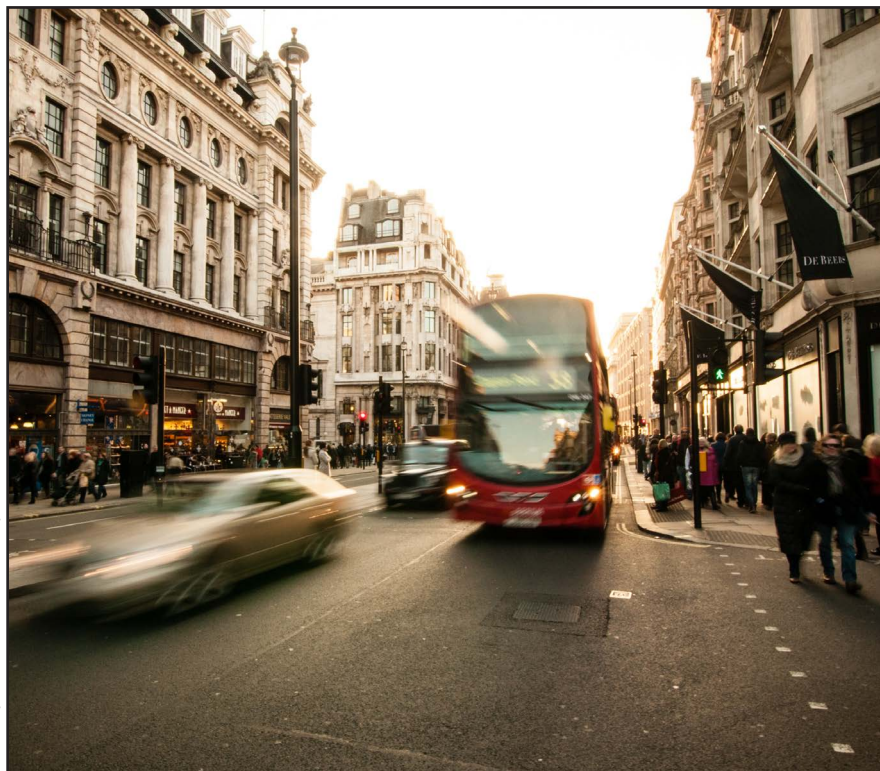
Report internally if you can. If nothing is actioned, you can report to CIRAS. You can help improve the safety of dispatch by doing this.



# Air conditioning prioritised and defect reporting improved

Defects were not being reported internally

Photo by David Marcu on Unsplash



## Concern

A concern was raised regarding defective air conditioning on board multiple models of buses operating from a London depot. It is a particular issue on different models of buses.

Without functioning air conditioning, the working environment within the cab can become very unpleasant and uncomfortable. Passengers have also complained about the temperature inside the vehicle.

**“Drivers can spend ten hours a day inside cabs without air conditioning...”**

Drivers can spend ten hours a day inside cabs without air conditioning. This was of particular concern back in the summer months.

The reporter said that the excessive heat can impact on the health of the drivers and cause distraction, potentially resulting in a road traffic accident.

### Actions requested:

- Record temperatures in the Drivers' cabs during periods of warm weather
- State how often air conditioning units are maintained and repaired when reported through internal channels
- Ensure all buses are fitted with fully functioning air conditioning units

## Response

It was confirmed that at that particular London depot there is a temporary supply of older vehicles (pre-2010) and the air conditioning does not perform as efficiently as expected.

**“A review with the external contractor is also underway to identify ways to enhance performance of the units.”**

Newer vehicles will be provided in the long term with more effective air conditioning units.

The units are regularly inspected as part of the internal 28 day rota cycle and by an external contractor every three months.

An investigation by the operator indicated that no air conditioning defects had been reported at this depot in the previous three months and so the operator has encouraged the reporting of defects when observed, by refreshing communications on the hazard reporting procedure.

A vehicle wide review of bus defect cards will be implemented to prioritise any air conditioning defects and tackled promptly with the air conditioning contractor.

**“...the operator has encouraged the reporting of defects when observed, by refreshing communications on the hazard reporting procedure.”**

In order to gather more information about the extent of the issue, heat data loggers will be installed on two buses to gather the actual temperature during service.

A review with the external contractor is also underway to identify ways to enhance performance of the units.

The outcome of this data collection will be shared with the depot.

### Put it into practice!

If you're uncomfortable because of the temperature at work, report internally if you can. If nothing is actioned, you can report to CIRAS. Your report can help improve defect reporting too, benefitting others.

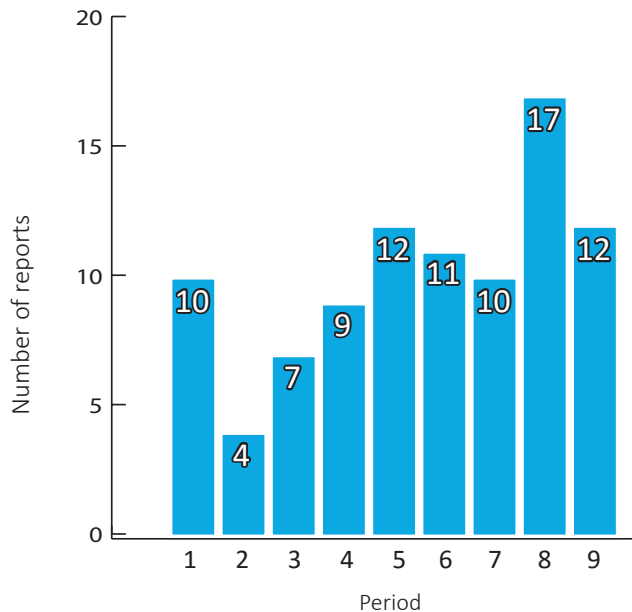
# CIRAS in numbers (April 3rd - December 9th 2017)

## Confidential reports and sector breakdown

### Reporting figures

Since the beginning of April 2017, we have taken 92 confidential reports. As shown below, the largest chunk of these were for Train Operating Companies (TOCS). The second largest category was Network Rail.

Confidential reports processed to date

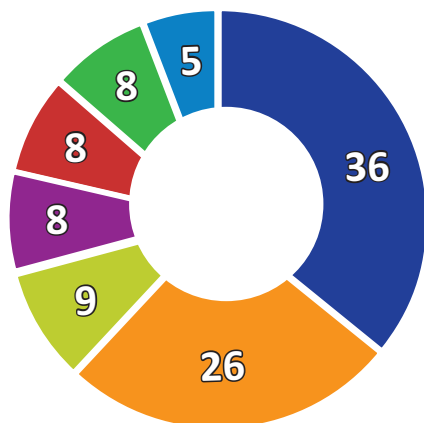


Period	
1	03 April - 30 Apr
2	01 May - 28 May
3	29 May - 25 June
4	26 Jun - 23 July
5	24 Jul - 20 Aug
6	21 Aug - 17 Sep
7	18 Sep - 15 Oct
8	16 Oct - 12 Nov
9	13 Nov - 10 Dec

**92**  
Confidential reports

### Reports processed by sector (%)\*

\*some reports may be sent to more than one sector



#### Sector

- TOC
- Network Rail
- Other\*\*
- FOC
- Network Rail - Supply Chain
- TfL - LUL
- TfL - Bus

\*\*Other includes British Transport Police, rolling stock operating company (ROSCOs), Heritage, Supplier and TfL Trams

#### CIRAS observations:

Reports remain predominantly from mainline rail sectors. There has been an increase in reports being sent to freight operating companies this quarter.

#### Points to consider

Reaching all staff who are eligible for scheme.



## What are the safety themes?

The top five reporting themes overall are outlined below. In the bar chart underneath, you can see that the themes breakdown are different according to each sector. For instance, a greater proportion of reports are about equipment in the TOC and Network Rail sectors than for other sectors. Fatigue reports feature more prominently for Freight Operating Companies (FOCs). Unsafe practices reports feature more prominently for Freight Operating Companies (FOCs).

Top five reporting themes



Equipment



Crowding



Fatigue

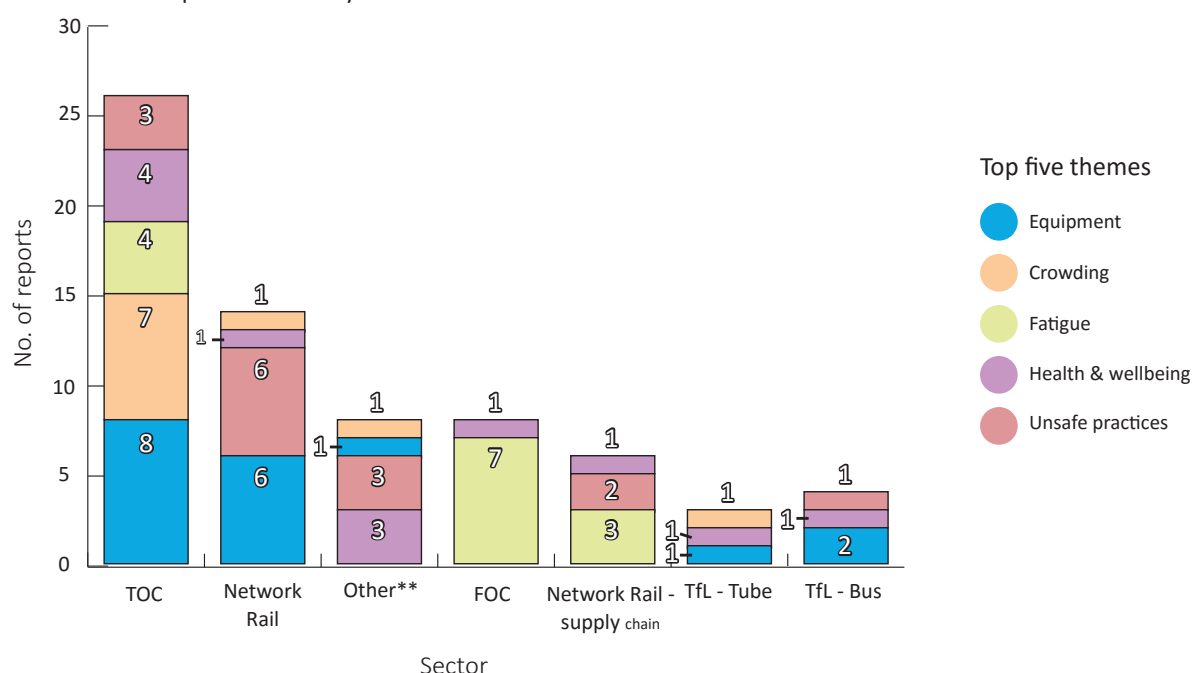


Health and wellbeing



Unsafe practices

Breakdown of top five themes by sector



### CIRAS observations:

Equipment and unsafe practices are the main theme raised across sectors this year.

### Points to consider

Are these top five issues what you're seeing in your organisation?

## Have your say!

In order to improve our service, we want to know what you think about CIRAS. For example - how much do you know about CIRAS? What are your thoughts on what we do?

We have created a short online survey which will be sent out in the next few weeks. It'll be called "CIRAS – Have your say". It'll only take you a few minutes, and is very easy to complete - please take the time to fill it out and tell us what you think. We'll use what you tell us to help make the CIRAS scheme better.

# Inadequate quality control causes injuries at school site

How CROSS and SCOSS work for the structural safety of buildings

CIRAS is not the only independent, confidential reporting scheme. Building and civil engineering have their own equivalent, although it is narrower in remit and does not cover quite the same broad spectrum of health and safety issues.

Frontline Matters takes a closer look at how it works with a real-life case study of structural collapse.

## Introduction

Structural-Safety is an independent umbrella organisation consisting of two entities.

The first is SCOSS (Standing Committee on Structural Safety), a committee which reviews building and civil engineering matters affecting the safety of structures. SCOSS publishes alerts and topic papers to highlight safety issues.

The second is CROSS (Confidential Reporting on Structural Safety), a confidential safety reporting scheme established by SCOSS to capture and share lessons learned which might not otherwise have had formal recognition.

CROSS publishes quarterly newsletters, which contain anonymised reports with comments from a CROSS panel of experts.

As shown in the pyramid of risk image, CROSS aims to capture the precursors with the aim of preventing serious injury or fatalities, just like CIRAS does.

## Extracts from a CROSS Report

### How does a steel canopy collapse and cause significant injuries?

During the construction of a major new school facility, a 57 metre single span structural steel truss failed.

This resulted in the catastrophic collapse of a steel framed canopy supported by the truss.



*Collapse of the steel framed canopy. © Structural Safety*

At the time, five workers were on top of the canopy, 15 metres above ground level.

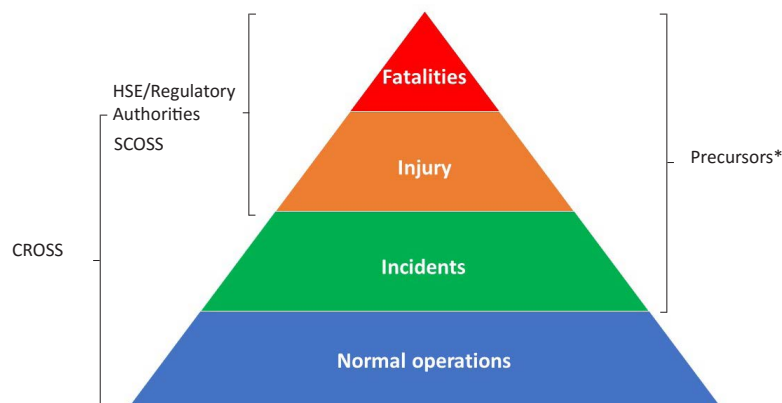
All received significant injuries but survived.

The immediate cause of the failure was associated with the fracture of a

number of sub-size fillet welds joining paired load bearing tie bars at nodal points.

### Mind the gap

The design of the 'T' shaped joint required the end of some connection plates to be cut with a bevel angle of 80.7°.



*Diagram courtesy of Aviation Safety Reporting System (ASRS)*

*Pyramid of risk. © Structural Safety*

\*Precursors should be reported internally and can be reported to CROSS





Reconstructed building. © Structural Safety

However, to simplify production, the plates were cut at 90° on the contact edge. This resulted in a gap of approximately 4.5 mm to one side of the joint. See Image 1 of the gap in an intact cross section recovered from the collapse.

Failure had occurred through the weld material at numerous nodes.

**“It appears that this event occurred through inadequate workmanship and inadequate quality control.”**

The assessment showed that failure of one connection at one node would have been sufficient to unzip the truss.

In other words, a single inadequate connection would make collapse highly likely. There were additional issues

with the design that made installation difficult and led to installers cutting and rewelding connections to the building.

**“To limit the risk of structural collapse, projects need to use sensible quality assurance practices.”**

Such site alterations are often implicated in collapse incidents. However, in this case the root cause lay elsewhere.

Legal requirements and published guidance and standards are based on ensuring that the designer provides a structural design that is sound and straightforward to build.

Welding standards for structural steelwork specify that visual inspection

be carried out before, during, and on completion of welding, to ensure that production quality is being maintained.

To limit the risk of structural collapse, projects need to use sensible quality assurance practices.

These include early and regular discussions and cooperation between designers, fabricators and installers.

#### **CROSS Panel Comments**

This is a classic example of the intimate relationship between design, workmanship and safety.

The failure also illustrates a theme that has surfaced in a number of recent reports - poor workmanship can lead to disaster.

It appears that this event occurred through inadequate workmanship and inadequate quality control.

In this case, the poor workmanship could not be detected by post-fabrication inspection.

Rather, to assure quality, inspection ‘before covering up’ should have been carried out.

Over the years, CROSS has received reports of failure involving tie rods of various types.

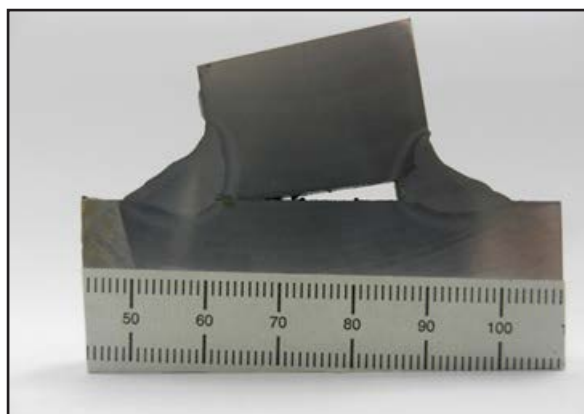


Image 1: Gap at end of shaped plate on intact cross-section. © Structural Safety

# Reporting comes to life in 'Prevent incidents in confidence' animation

## Explaining the process from a reporter's perspective

We wanted to explain how the CIRAS reporting process works, and thought the best way to do this would be through a short, animated video.

**"When you're free to talk, we'll listen to your concern over the phone."**

The sketches below are taken from the video and describe the stages of reporting.

From feeling that something is not quite right at work, to getting a concern resolved, we're here to make a difference.

When you're free to talk, we'll listen to your concern over the phone.

We'll turn what you say into a report and will remove all identifying information and then chase the response for you.

This makes the whole process as easy as possible. Leave the hard work to us!

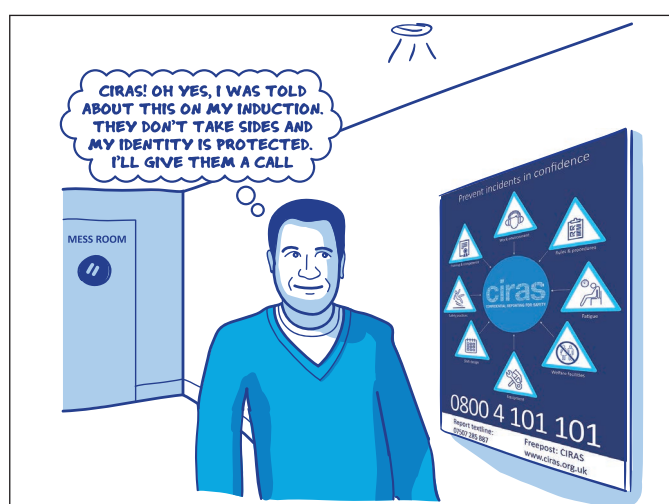
We take great pride in helping to facilitate the resolution of health and safety issues that can weigh heavily on your mind.

We're here if you need us.

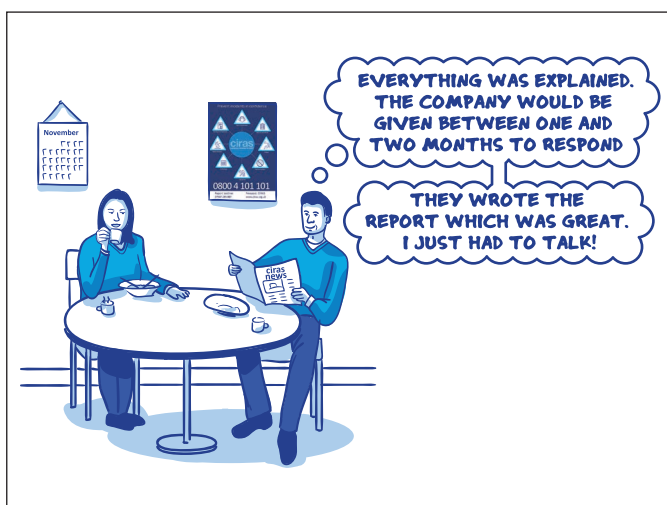
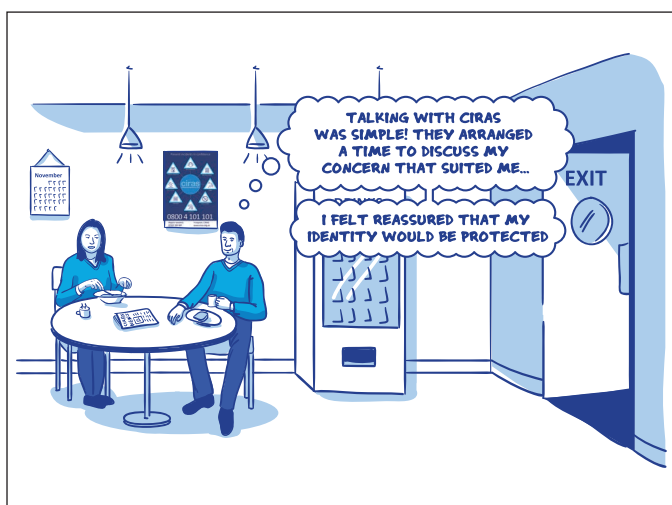
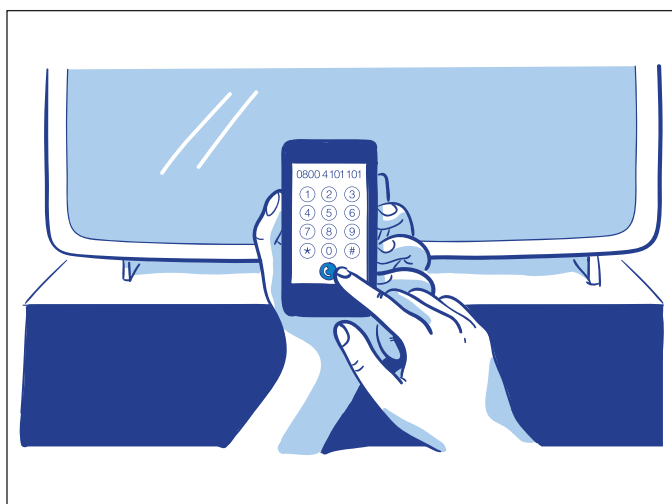
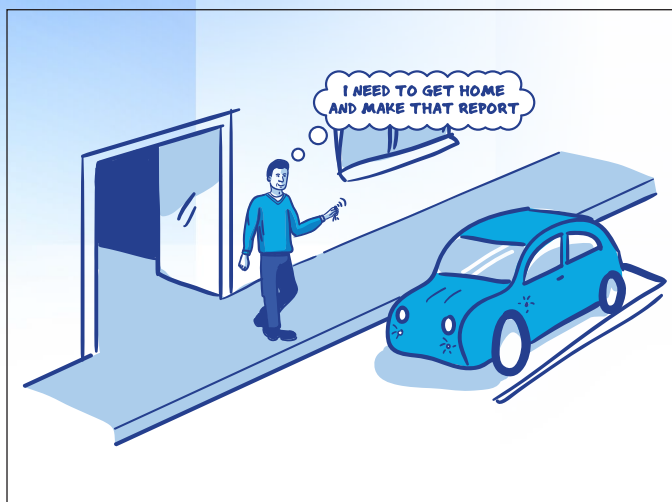
Some of you may have spotted our new poster making an appearance in the animation, if you would like to request hard-copies for your company, please contact us (see email below).

**"We take great pride in helping to facilitate the resolution of health and safety issues that can weigh heavily on your mind."**

Thank you to everyone who has provided us with great feedback so far. If you would like to let us know your thoughts on the video, please email [editor@ciras.org.uk](mailto:editor@ciras.org.uk).

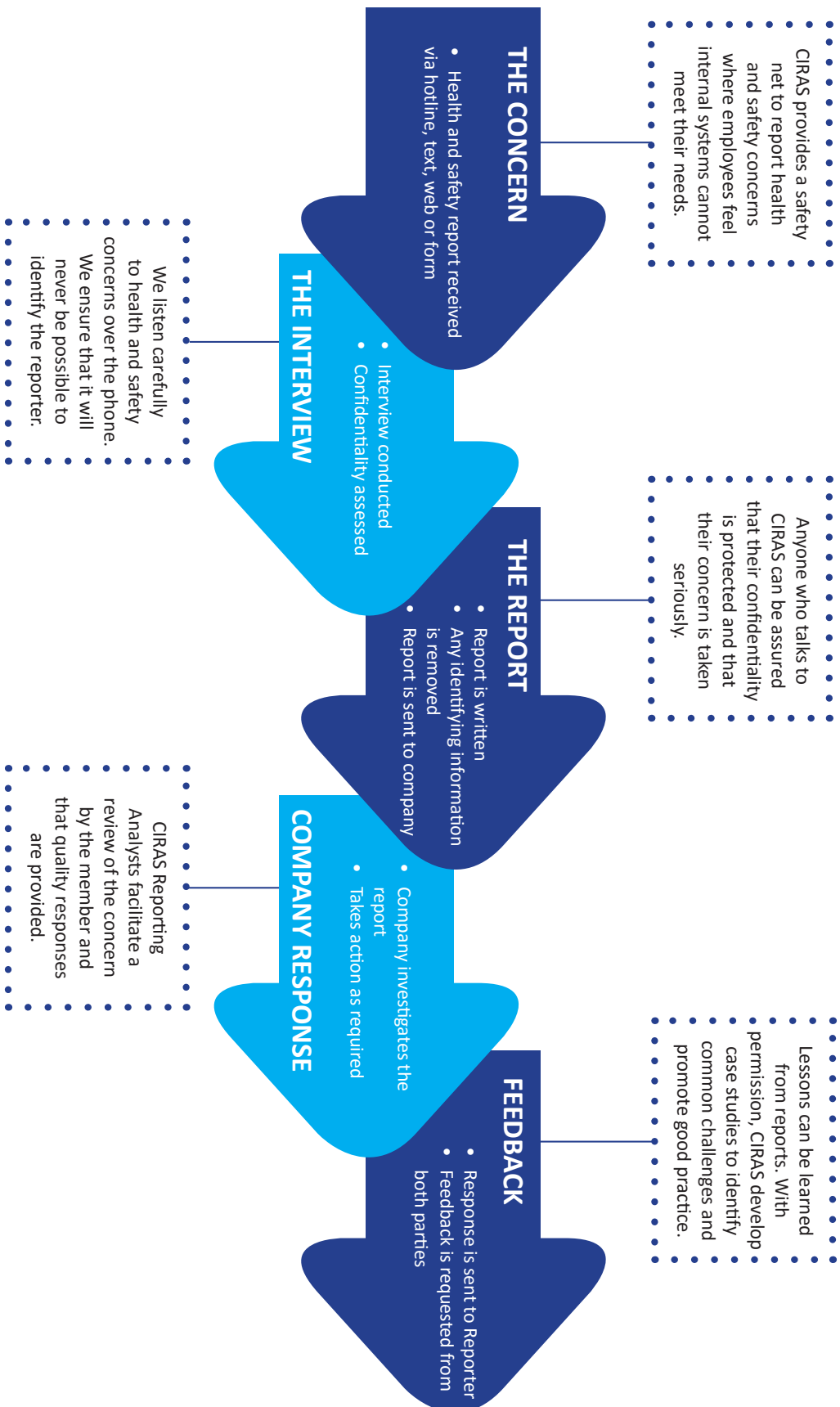






# Reporting life cycle

The diagram explains the process for reporting to CIRAS when you have a health and safety concern





# Do you have any **concerns** about health and safety?

Have you tried internal reporting channels, or don't feel that you can?

If so, please provide your contact details in the space below. Any information you provide will be treated as confidential.

We ask you to provide your name and contact details so that a CIRAS reporting analyst can get in touch to discuss your report. Once your report is processed, your report form will be destroyed.

CIRAS will never reveal your personal information to anyone!

Name:

Home phone no:

Mobile phone no:

Convenient time to call:

Job title:

Company:

Home address:

## Optional

If you would like to briefly describe your concern, please do so in the space provided below:

.....

.....

.....

.....

*There are other ways of contacting us if you prefer. You can call us, text us, or fill out a form online.  
All our details are at the bottom of the page.*

## What happens next?

- A member of the CIRAS team will get in touch and discuss your health and safety concerns.
- A written report will be prepared on your behalf.
- We will make sure the report does not contain ANY information that can identify YOU.
- We then send the report to the relevant company for a response.
- Once we receive the company response we will then provide you with a copy.

Fill out the form, cut along the dotted line and seal.



CONFIDENTIAL

POSTAGE  
PAID

# FREEPOST CIRAS

Fold along the dotted line and seal edges



## Prevent incidents in confidence

Report hotline:  
0800 4 101 101

Report textline:  
07507 285 887

Freepost: CIRAS  
www.ciras.org.uk