

No: NRS 315

Network Rail Safety Bulletin

'Smart Glass' Technology

Applicable to all Network Rail employees and contractors.

Background:

This year 'Smart Glass' technology is due to go sale in the United Kingdom. 'Smart Glasses' have the appearance of a pair of spectacles with a built-in computer and a small display unit over one eye. The wearer can use them to perform a number of functions such as browsing the internet, following instructions/directions, reading e-mails, messaging, gaming and recording images. 'Smart Glass' technology is already being used by the public in countries like the United States and Taiwan.



Issues:

The potential risks and opportunities that this technology presents in relation to passenger, workforce and public health & safety in the railway environment have been subject to a preliminary assessment by Network Rail. Issues identified were:

1. The potential for visual/audio/mental distraction could result in an increase in unsafe acts or reduced reaction to unsafe conditions culminating in an increased risk of accidents. This applies to passengers at stations; staff or contractors when working or driving/walking; or members of the public using level crossings.
2. The potential health affects from short or long-term use are not yet known.
3. Currently, there is no rail industry or Network Rail policy in relation to the wearing of 'Smart Glass' technology whilst on duty.
4. A number of potential opportunities have also been identified that could help improve safety such as providing way-finding information at stations.
5. To evaluate the potential risk and opportunities Network Rail has requested RSSB to conduct research into the potential impact this technology may have on health and safety. In the interim S&SD Executive has instructed implementation of the action below until a policy is developed and the outcome of the RSSB research is available.

Action Required

Until further guidance is issued, all Network Rail employees and contractors are prohibited from wearing 'Smart Glass' technology whilst working on Network Rail Managed Infrastructure, when driving on company business or when undertaking safety critical roles.

Issued on behalf of:

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