

News Release from Network Rail

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NETWORK RAIL BUYS BRITISH DESIGNED AND MADE SAFETY COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

Direct, secure and even safer communication between train drivers and signallers came closer today with the announcement that Network Rail is investing £24m to fit state-of-the-art in-cab radios in the majority of the British train fleet over the next three years.

Network Rail is installing the new Railway Communications System (RCS) across the whole British rail network. This will see the current analogue systems replaced by a high-specification, digital system.

Passengers will benefit from increased safety and reliability. The Railway Communications System will allow the driver to contact a signaller within seconds, which could prove vital in emergencies. Better communications will also enable train operators to recover from delays more quickly while keeping passengers better informed.

Consistent on-time performance benefits have been demonstrated during extensive testing near Strathclyde. This testing has been running since October 2007, with over 200 cabs fitted as part of a trial which will run until Autumn 2009. This has progressed well with strong support from First ScotRail.

The first batch of these new radios – designed and manufactured in the UK – will be delivered to Network Rail in July this year with DB Schenker, First Great Western, London Midland and Virgin Trains being some of the first train operating companies to benefit from the new technology.

Network Rail, the Association of Train Operating Companies and Siemens have worked together for the last three years developing this equipment to meet the demands of the train operators and passengers.

Jon Wiseman, Network Rail's programme director (RCS), said:

"This deal is good news for the railway and the economy. It is a sign of commitment and a major step forward by the industry in delivering the Railway Communications

System. This new system will be up and running within five years and will make our railway even safer. Extensive testing is also beginning to show real performance benefits that will improve trains services for passengers and freight users.”

Michael Roberts, chief executive of ATOC, said:

"We welcome the large order for GSM-R train radios to a specification developed in close consultation with train operators. ATOC looks forward to further work with Network Rail on a range of key GSM-R issues, but today's announcement is a vital step towards timely deployment of the project for the benefit of all users."

Notes to Editors:

The Railway Communications System is built to the international GSM-R specification.

The in-cab technology will be rolled out across the whole of the British railway. The entire network will be operational by 2013 with the system working in London and the South East and the South West by 2012.

About Network Rail

Network Rail is the 'not for dividend' owner and operator of Britain's railway infrastructure, which includes the tracks, signals, tunnels, bridges, viaducts, level crossings and stations - the largest of which we also manage

We aim to provide a safe, reliable and efficient rail infrastructure for freight and passenger trains to use

Our website: <http://www.networkrail.co.uk>