



Department for Transport

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4th November 2022

Dear [redacted]

THE RAILWAYS (INTEROPERABILITY) REGULATIONS 2011: INNOVATIVE SOLUTION EXEMPTION FOR BRENT CROSS WEST STATION DANGER AREA MARKING

Thank you for your application of 15 July 2022, requesting an exemption under Regulation 14(2) (f) of the Railways (Interoperability) Regulations 2011 (RIR 2011) for the danger area marking at Brent Cross West station and for the accompanying risk assessment. Regulation 14 (2) (f) states that an exemption can be granted for cases where a project employs innovative solutions that either do not comply with the relevant NTSNs or to which the assessment methods in the specified NTSNs cannot be applied.

You have requested exemption from clause 4.2.1.12(6) of the Persons with Reduced Mobility (PRM) NTSN, which states: "The boundary of the danger area, furthest from the rail side edge of the platform, shall have a visual marking and tactile walking surface indicators".

As your application explains, this standard implies that the visual marking and tactile walking surface should be co-located to mark the boundary of the danger area. Your application highlights that tactile surfaces are used in Great Britain to mark the edge of the platform, and to help visually impaired passengers orient themselves for boarding the train. Your application notes the importance of this tactile surface being at a consistent distance (760mm) from the platform edge across the network to achieve the primary purpose of orientation.

The risk assessment you provided shows that the aerodynamic risk from trains passing through Brent Cross West station at high speed makes the danger area on some of its platforms larger than typical stations on the network. Your assessment notes that to mitigate against this risk in a way that complies with the PRM NTSN danger area requirements would necessitate either:

- Moving the tactile surface to where the danger area ends, meaning it would be further away from the edge of the platform compared to other stations on the network; and/or
- Installing two tactile surfaces, one to mark the edge of the platform, and a second to mark the edge of the danger area, differing from other stations on the network where only one tactile is typically used.

Your application states that implementing one or both of these solutions could pose a safety risk to visually impaired passengers, as it would make the tactile provisions at Brent Cross West station different from other stations on the rail network, which could confuse users. Your

application proposes instead to apply the Railway Industry Standard (RIS) 7016-INS Issue 1.2, Part 9.4, which is based on the RSSB research paper T1118 (“Optimising the design and position of platform markings designed to keep people away from the platform edge”). This research demonstrated that the tactile paving to mark the edge of the platform should remain in a consistent place across the network, and that other mitigating measures should be employed to ensure passengers stand at a safe place on the platform. RIS 7016-INS allows:

1. A visual marking to mark the edge of the danger area (1500mm away from the edge of the platform based on your station risk assessment);
2. A tactile surface to mark the edge of the platform to aid the visually impaired in boarding the trains (760mm away from the edge of the platform, as per current industry practice); and
3. Other mitigations, including audio announcements at the station, to be employed to reduce the risk to passengers in not marking the edge of the danger area through a tactile surface.

Your application provided evidence that the operator has agreed to this proposed approach.

DfT has considered your proposal in consultation with the ORR. We have determined that the proposed solution to keep the tactile provisions at Brent Cross West station consistent with the rest of the network and apply mitigating solutions in accordance with RIS-79016-INS represents an “innovative solution”, which better reduces the risk to passengers than applying clause 4.2.1.12(6) of the PRM NTSN. We are also satisfied that this “innovative solution” helps to make visually impaired passengers safer when navigating the station environment. On that basis, it is the Competent Authority’s decision that the requested exemption is granted. This exemption does not exempt you or the station operator from the responsibility to manage safety risks to the level required by law, and your Regulation 14 proposal has not been evaluated against this legal standard.

I am copying this letter to [redacted] at the ORR.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

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