

Circular No IR/300/11

Dear Colleagues,

**TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITY TO RAIL OPERATING CENTRES –
SIGNALLING AND ECRO STAFF – NETWORK RAIL**

I write to advise branches that at the recent National Ops Council Committee held on 19th July 2011, Network Rail formally announced their intention to radically alter signalling and control operations across the country. Over the next 30 years they plan to reduce the number of Operations locations from 900 to just 14 centralised Operations centres. This will be achieved by an ongoing plan of signal box and control centre closures with functions moving stage by stage to the new Operating centres. In terms of staffing levels this will result in a reduction from 6000 to 2000 operational posts.

Firstly I should reassure members that Network Rail's proposals are at a very early stage as funding has not even been granted for the signal box closures. However the same cannot be said for our ECRO members. Funding is already in place to move all ECRO locations to two new centres in Three Bridges and Manchester from 2014 which will result in substantial job losses. I understand that overall ECRO numbers will be reduced from 300 to 100 as a result of moving to just 2 locations from the current 13.

Overall there are 900 Signalling and Control workplaces in Britain and, by the end of the 30 year process, Network Rail plan that there will be only 14 Operations centres covering the whole country. Some of these centres will be responsible for all Signalling and Electrical Control functions. Some Centres already exist whereas some will be built over the next few years.

Centres already built	Investment required	New Centres
Derby	Didcot	Three Bridges 2013
Gillingham	Glasgow	Manchester 2013
Cardiff		Romford 2014
Saltley		York 2014
Edinburgh		Basingstoke 2015
Ashford		Rugby 2016

Upgrading and re-signalling schemes are nothing new to the railway and since 1960 the number of locations has gone down from 5000 to 900. With 6000 staff currently employed in operational grades, Network Rail intends to halve this number to 3000 within 10 years. Further reductions will take place over the next 20 years to reduce this further to 2000 operations posts. Network Rail has stated that they intend that the majority of this reorganisation is to be achieved through natural wastage and the process has begun to map out how this could be achieved. We have been told that Local managers will be distributing information giving details of their plans.

RMT has made its position abundantly clear. There must be no compulsory redundancies, the Promotion, Transfer Redundancy and Resettlement arrangements (PTR&R) must be fully complied with throughout all reorganisations and re-signalling schemes. Any reductions in posts that arise should be accommodated through natural wastage, a shorter working week, additional annual leave and the right to retire at 55 on full pension entitlement.

We will be holding further discussions with the company over the coming months and I will be sure to keep branches fully informed of any further developments.

Yours sincerely

Bob Crow

General Secretary

[Transfer of Responsibility to Rail Operating Centres – Signalling and ECRO Staff–
Network Rail](#)