



Department for  
**Transport**

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Andy Reed MP  
House of Commons  
LONDON  
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*Dear Andy*

I am writing to update you on progress with train horn noise following my meeting with you of 18 October. During our meeting I mentioned that a cross-industry steering group was currently undertaking a review of the use of train horns and that they would be reporting their findings before the end of 2006. I indicated that I was determined that this timescale would not slip and undertook to write to you again with an update after I had discussed this serious matter with the Rail Safety & Standards Board (RSSB).

I can now inform you that I have discussed the findings of the steering group with the RSSB and they will now be publishing their recommendations on their website for consultation later today. I am informed the main recommendations will include:

- Introduction of a night time ban from 11pm to 7am on the use of train horns at whistle boards (though drivers will still be expected to sound their horns if they see people close to the track);
- where possible, the use of only the "low" tone horn at whistle boards;
- for all new trains capable of speeds up to 160kph or when changing train horns, establish a lower minimum sound pressure level of 101dB, and a maximum of 106dB;
- over time, further reduce the number of whistle boards through, crossing closures, local review, challenging some of the current criteria, and adopting a new level crossing risk model;
- review and eradicate all other routine requirements to sound train horns;
- the industry will continue to develop a specification for possible alternative technologies.

The RSSB have informed me that the consultation (both industry and public) will run for 28 days from today's date, and subject to the consultation findings many of the recommendations could be implemented as standard by April 2007.

I hope these recommendations will go some way to addressing the majority of concerns and I will follow the consultation and further work with interest.

*Best wishes*

*Tom*

**TOM HARRIS**