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## TRAIN DERAILMENT AT POTTERS BAR

Dear Colleague

All of us have been shocked and enormously saddened by the tragic accident at Potters Bar on 10 May. I am sure that all of our thoughts and deepest sympathies are with the victims, their families and friends. Safety has always been at the top of our agenda, before anything else, and the impact of this appalling event is felt throughout the company. We are providing every assistance possible to the police, the Health & Safety Executive and to Railtrack.

There has been much speculation as to the cause of the accident and I felt it important to write to you to keep you informed.

The initial indications are that a set of points to the south of Potters Bar moved as the rear of the third carriage of the train passed over them, deflecting the fourth and last carriage to the left. It is believed this happened because, nuts on two stretcher bars were detached and the third locking bar connecting the tips of the points then had been subject to an abnormal level of force causing it to fail.

The questions that now have to be answered are why the nuts were detached and how the locking bar came to be placed under additional pressure.

Photographs taken of the points immediately following the accident and recently made available, indicate to us that, in addition to the two sets of nuts on the outside of the stretcher bars having been removed, the inner nuts had been adjusted on the critical rear stretcher bar in the 48 hours before the accident. All of this information together with some further detailed analysis, has been made available to the British Transport Police and Railtrack on 16th May 2002. It is our belief that it is too early to judge the ultimate cause of the accident and that sabotage cannot be discounted.

Jarvis holds the contract from Railtrack for both track renewals and track maintenance for the East Coast Main Line which includes the track at Potters Bar. We took over the track maintenance on 1 April 2001. Since then we have increased the number of engineers working on the line and in the first year there has been a marked reduction in the number of faults on the line. Although much work remains to be done, we have made significant progress in a relatively short period.



The maintenance records relating to the work on the points at Potters Bar show that maintenance and inspection had been carried out in accordance with the regime agreed with Railtrack. There are two separate Jarvis teams involved in the work: one team of specialist signal technicians who inspect and maintain signals and points and a second team of patrolmen who carry out weekly inspections on the line and equipment. Each of these teams comprised full time Jarvis employees certified to the correct levels to undertake the work that they are asked to do. They are experienced railwaymen.

The signals team carried out its routine quarterly maintenance of the points on 6 March this year and the next regular maintenance was scheduled for early June. In addition to the quarterly maintenance, the points are tested every four weeks, the most recent test being carried out on 1 May. It was on this day that the three man team, comprising two technicians and a look out, found that two of the nuts securing one stretcher bar had become detached. As part of their inspection they firmly reattached the nuts. This was not reported at the time.

Subsequent to this work, the routine line patrol inspection took place on 9 May. As part of this inspection the patrolmen test points for physical integrity. The patrol did not find any problems with the points.

It is also worth noting that in addition to the routine Jarvis inspections there was on 20 March a joint Railtrack and Jarvis inspection of the points. This inspection involved close examination and found no problems.

In the days following the incident there has been much press speculation about the position of the company's insurance cover for negligence. Jarvis, as all contractors to the Rail Industry are required to do, carries extensive third party liability insurance up to the level required by the Strategic Rail Authority, of £155 million which would not exclude gross negligence.

We will continue to work closely with the relevant authorities to help them ascertain the cause of this tragic accident. Finally, let me thank all of you for the work that you already do to make Jarvis a safe company and also for your support shown to the company at this time.

Colin Skellett Chairman