

N F I R



National Federation of Indian Railwaymen

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Affiliated to :

Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC)
International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)

No.II/34/Pt.12

Dated: 10/08/2015

The Member Mechanical,
Railway Board,
New Delhi

Dear Sir,

Sub: Disadvantages caused due to Bio-toilets introduced in the passenger coaches of Indian Railways – reg.

The concept of bio-toilets in passenger carrying coaches was given shape by the Railway Ministry some time in the year 2011 when in a few coaches of passenger carrying mail/express trains, the bio-toilets were first introduced. NFIR understands that the Railway Ministry has plans to fit bio-toilets in all 55000 passenger coaches by 2021.

Federation has been receiving number of complaints from the C&W Staff on malfunctioning vis-a-vis disadvantages of the bio-toilets. In this connection, NFIR having gone into the complaints received from the C&W Staff, noticed the following problems which may cause serious health hazards to staff.

- The bio-toilet system is very sensitive. It has more than 100% chances of choking even with a bit of 'Pan Gutka' spitted in the toilets by the passengers knowing or unknowingly if not flushed properly by the passenger in the moving or stationary trains. Choking in these toilets also takes place due to throwing of Napkins, Cigarette buds, Gutka Pouch, Ladies Pads, Plastic Water Bottles or their covers, liquor bottles and garbage of food stuff by the passengers resulting overflowing of toilet pans and leading to public complaints. This situation has been causing tremendous pressure on staff for no fault of theirs.
- The ball-valve provided which should function to drain out the waste to the ground by operating a connected pedal, never works due to faulty design. It is also reported that the designs differ from one manufacturer to another, causing problems in procurement of spares.
- The RDSO designed simplified standard mechanism to operate the ball valve seems to be not compatible with old designs.
- It has been further complained that improper trials of revised versions/modifications before implementation has been the real problem in procurement of spares and has been creating confusion among the Supervisors and Staff in the course of maintenance.
- The C&W Supervisors and staff working in pit lines have been facing lot of inconvenience during under gear maintenance, examining brake beam, brake block hanger, brake shoe assembly, brake blocks, safety wire rope & their pins, bogies frames and also facing serious inconvenience in piston stroke of brake cylinder which faces tank of quite a big size and leaves narrow gap.

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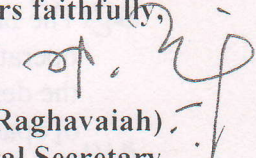
- Bio-toilets required inspection & maintenance to ensure working of Ball-Valve & its operation linked with P-trap and Hose Connector, mounted and fitted in the narrow gap of the top surface of the tank and trough floor of the coach. C&W Engineers and staff have been put to lot of difficulties during maintenance and have been subjected to more physical & mental stress in day-to-day working. While working they are being compelled to inhale foul smells emanating from the choked tanks containing human waste and have started acquiring diseases.
- The process of draining out of the choked tanks generates unbearable filthy smell creating inconvenience to other technical staff working on other under gears and at times diverts their attention and compels to ignore the necessary safety repairs due to bad work environment.
- At present we have this system only on 10% of the coaches, causing serious problems. The height of the problems can be measured when 100% coaches will have this system and will it be possible for staff to function? The C&W Supervisors and staff are reported to have become like human scavengers. It is worth-mentioning that the Government of India had banned scavenging in the year 1993 consequent to the directions given by the Apex Court through various judgements.

2. Federation has further been given to understand that as per Railway Board's guidelines effluent test is required to be conducted to over 5% population of each type of coaches at an interval of 3 months and is to be conducted by the expert laboratory staff. Unfortunately, the Railway Authorities, instead of using Lab Staff for the said purpose, have been pestering C&W Staff to collect effluent from Bio-Tanks for conducting test in some Depots like Gwalior, despite the fact that this job is not related to C&W staff.

Federation notes with disappointment that the 'Bio-toilet' system introduced on the I.R. is claimed to be environment friendly but it is not so, particularly for the C&W Supervisors & Technical Staff of Mechanical Department.

NFIR, therefore, requests the Railway Board (MM) to kindly see that thorough review is conducted before proceeding further for introducing Bio-toilets in coaches.

Yours faithfully,


(Dr M. Raghavaiah)
General Secretary

Copy to the General Managers of Zonal Railways for necessary action please.
Copy to the Advisor (Safety), Railway Board, New Delhi.
Copy to the General Secretaries of Zonal Unions of NFIR.
Copy to Media Centre/NFIR.

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