

**Legislative Council Panel on Transport
Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways**

**An Incident Relating to
the “Last Train All Right” Handsignal
for the West Rail Line on 29 November 2009**

Introduction

This paper provides information on an incident relating to the giving of the “Last Train All Right” Handsignal¹ (hereinafter called the “Handsignal”) for the MTR Corporation’s West Rail Line (WRL) train departing Hung Hom Station on 29 November 2009.

The Incident

2. At 12:09 a.m. on 29 November 2009, the Tuen Mun-bound last train of WRL departed Hung Hom Station as per the last train departure time which is displayed at the station entrance. The Train Captain believed that he had seen the Handsignal from the platform staff to indicate that all passengers have boarded the train. In fact, the Handsignal had not yet been given to the Train Captain. Some 15 passengers arrived at the platform after the last train had departed at the scheduled time. As the particular operating procedure for the last train had not been properly observed, the Corporation immediately deployed an additional train at 12:13 a.m. to serve those passengers who were intending to take the last train but were unable to.

3. Apart from the said incident at Hung Hom Station, both the last train concerned and the additional train had stopped at all stations enroute to Tuen Mun, with normal platform duties having been properly carried out.

Handling of the Last Train

4. All MTR trains are scheduled to depart from each station according to a pre-set timetable. Under normal service, when the proceed signal is available, Train Captains of MTR trains are required to perform platform duties to facilitate passengers boarding and alighting, and to ensure the proper closing of train doors/platform screen doors

¹ The Handsignal is a manual communication with hand-held light between platform staff and the Train Captain to indicate that all passengers intending to take the last train have successfully boarded the last train.

before departing from the platform.

5. As for the last train, under the current operating procedure for the last train leaving a station, in addition to following the above procedures for normal service, the Train Captain must also follow the Last Train All Right Handsignal. The Train Captain is required to wait until the platform staff gives the Handsignal before departing the station. This is an additional arrangement to ensure that all passengers intending to take the last train have successfully boarded before the last train leaves the station.

6. The Handsignal is a manual communication with hand-held light between platform staff and the Train Captain for good customer service and to indicate that all passengers intending to take the last train have successfully boarded the last train. It has no bearing on the safe operation of train.

Cause of the Incident

7. After the incident at Hung Hom Station, the Corporation has conducted a review and concluded that the Train Captain had mistakenly believed that he had been given the Handsignal. Subsequent review of the train log and CCTV footage confirmed that both the last train and the additional train had stopped at each station enroute and that all passengers were able to board and alight properly.

Improvement Measure

8. The 29 November 2009 incident was caused by the Train Captain's failure to correctly observe the Handsignal. We have shared the lesson learned to all train staff and reminded them to carefully observe the Handsignal for the last train to avoid the occurrence of similar incidents. The incident is now being used as a case study for all train staff in ongoing refresher classes. As a remedial measure, an additional training class has been arranged for the train captain concerned with a view to reinforcing the proper procedure required when conducting platform duties, and in particular, highlighting the additional requirement for the last train platform duties, i.e. to follow the Handsignal.

MTR Corporation
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