Swindon & Cricklade Railway

Footplate Experience Days – Safety Advice to Applicant

Thank you for applying to join the Swindon & Cricklade Railway's Footplate Experience Day.

This document aims to provide you with guidance on the basic principles of personal safety whilst you are at the railway.

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act, each and every individual has a duty of care and responsibility both for their own safety, the safety of their colleagues and that of the general public.

This document gives advice on a number of areas of safety.

1. CLOTHING

- Working near or with steam locomotives is a dirty and hazardous job, which is why we recommend that you wear old clothes. It is very likely that some of your clothes may get dirty.
- Wearing overalls, such as a boiler suit or bib and braces, will not only help you to protect your clothing, but offer you better protection. We therefore advise you to bring overalls if you have them or we can normally supply some for you on the day.
- A good standard of footwear is also required and the use of sensible shoes is essential. We do not accept trainers as they do not provide adequate protection against heavy objects or hot cinders. We recommend safety footwear but either tough boots or heavy shoes would suffice; again these can get very dirty so if you need to buy some – buy them cheap.
- Heavy duty gloves are essential; everything on a steam locomotive (especially the footplate) is extremely hot and, therefore, it is necessary to ensure you have a suitable pair of gloves for the job. We can supply these if required.

2. WORKING WITH THE LOCOMOTIVE AND ITS CREW

- When joining the locomotive you will be under the supervision of the experienced crew, the driver and, if a steam locomotive, the fireman. Both are responsible for your safety so when they ask you to do something please listen very carefully and follow their instructions. If you are unsure of what they want you to do please ask them to explain again.
- Every locomotive has a series of handrails and footsteps. It is important that these are kept clean from oil. If you see them covered with oil it is important to report it to the fireman, who will show you how to clean them.
- Working in and around the yard and sidings can present various hazards so we also advise you to be extremely wary when in the yard. Locomotives and rolling stock can be moving around at any time, so move to a safe place, keep a good lookout and listen for sounds of movement.
- Be aware that a locomotive whistle being sounded may mean that the locomotive is about to move.

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- When a locomotive does move under its own power, stand well clear – on steam locomotives, steam and hot water may be emitted from the cylinder cocks and possibly the chimney.

3. WHEN DRIVING THE LOCOMOTIVE

- To become a locomotive driver takes a lot of hard work to fully understand how a steam locomotive works. We can only outline the main principles to you in one day.
- Whilst providing advice in controlling the locomotive, the driver will also be observing the road ahead. If you are unsure about the instructions from the driver or the fireman then please ask him.

4. WHILST ON THE MOVE

- While the locomotive is in motion, the footplate can make for an uncomfortable and far from smooth ride. If the locomotive hits an uneven bit of track it can make the locomotive 'bounce' so hold onto something when you are not involved in any specific duty.