

# MANAGEMENT OF COVID-19

## GUIDANCE FOR RAILWAY STAKEHOLDERS

A series of potential measures published by the International Union of Railways  
March 2020



INTERNATIONAL UNION  
OF RAILWAYS

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# 1. CONTEXT

## OBJECTIVES

Amid the coronavirus disease outbreak, UIC has set up a task force combining UIC member companies, experts and other relevant stakeholders (ALAF, APTA, CER, CIT, IATA, and UITP<sup>1</sup>) to work together to find ways to respond to this crisis that are adapted to the railway sector.

In the frame of prevention and fight against diseases and other crises, continuity of rail operations is key to provide mobility and to guarantee the continuation of critical activities, whilst taking into account the trend of absenteeism and maintaining public health. Rail operators are likely to be required to adapt their services to ensure both cargo and passengers services. This should consider the operator's resources and measures taken by authorities. Hence, this collection of potential measures to help railway stakeholders maintain resilience.

The potential measures contained in this guidance, published by UIC, were collected in February-March 2020 with the aim to assist railway stakeholders and provide reliable information about the specific challenges for rail when it comes to this communicable disease.

The objectives of this document are therefore two-fold:

- To collect and share practices from UIC members on actions already in place; and
- To provide potential measures which could be implemented according to the risk level in full coordination with and the guidance of competent health authorities.

This document is intended for guidance only. Its contents shall be neither considered as definitive nor as requirements. These potential measures are provided as examples and could evolve overtime, depending on changes to the risk level. Measures provided here within are to be used by railway stakeholders as seen fit and on their own responsibility.

## METHOD

In the spirit of sharing current practices, UIC members and partner organisations provided information through many means: during the Task Force meetings, directly with an email to the Task Force members, or through the UIC Security Division Network of Quick Responders & UIC special group COLPOFER jointly developed questionnaire (see Annex).

Therefore, this document has been enriched with information from all possible sources (whether official, informal, through the press, through social networks, or originating from exchanges between Task Force participants) as long as these sources provide relevant, additional elements to our (on-going) collection of measures and practices.

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<sup>1</sup> ALAF: Latin American Railway Association, APTA: American Public Transportation Association, CER: Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies, CIT: International Rail Transport Committee, IATA: International Air Transport Association, UITP: international organisation for public transport authorities and operators.

## COVID-19: WHAT WE KNOW

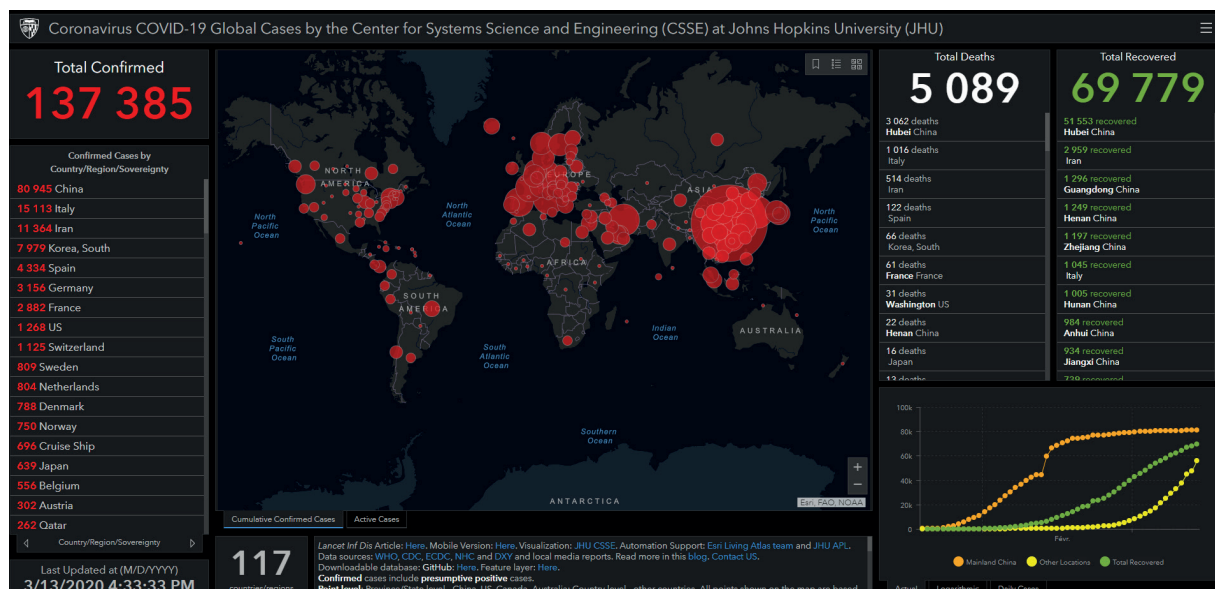
Colloquially referred to simply as coronavirus disease, Covid-19 is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) of the Coronaviridae family according to WHO. The outbreak began in December 2019 and has since spread to become a global issue, with outbreaks in several countries. Since the last week of February 2020, Europe has been highly impacted as well.

Based on current medical reports the virus spreads by direct contact with respiratory droplets, generated by the coughing or sneezing of an infected person, or indirectly as smear infection by touching contaminated hands or surfaces.

The most common Covid-19 symptoms include fever, fatigue and dry cough. Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhoea. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually. Some people become infected but do not develop any symptoms and do not feel unwell.

It is not certain how long the virus that causes Covid-19 survives on surfaces, but it seems to behave like other coronaviruses. Studies suggest that coronaviruses (including preliminary information on the Covid-19 virus) may persist on surfaces for a few hours or up to several days. This may vary under different conditions (e.g. type of surface, temperature or humidity of the environment).

3



Update 13/03/2020.

Source: CSSE <https://gisanddata.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6>

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## 2. POTENTIAL MEASURES

### 2.1 PREPAREDNESS

It is highly recommended that any preparedness measures taken by individual companies should be seen as an integral part of existing crisis management structures and consistent with existing national procedures.

#### **Preventive measures/procedures**

**A company task force could be created to monitor the evolution of the situation.**

Ideally, the task force could be made up of the Board of Directors and heads of or key members of operational departments.

Some examples of issues that the task force could address include:

- Identifying the main partners and contacts
  - For example, authorities (local and national government, public health authorities), Trade Unions/Work Councils/Representatives (to ensure the commitment of staff), Associations (people with reduced mobility and other disabilities to avoid exclusion), and international correspondents for cross-border operations
- Ensuring that personnel in critical functions (control room, signalling centres...) are carefully handled for business continuity
- Identifying employees who could back up critical positions
- Establishing how to deal with absenteeism
- Identifying the preventive measures and procedures to be taken (see below)

**Preventive measures and procedures should be defined depending on the location.**

Some examples of preventive measures and/or procedures may include:

- Designing a social distancing policy, for example:
  - Promoting greetings and farewells that do not include handshakes, kisses, etc;
  - Using touch-free devices whenever possible (e.g. touch-free thermometers);

- Staying more than 1 meter (5 feet) away from colleagues;
- Designing a single-use policy for restaurants on board trains to avoid kitchen contamination
  - For example, single-use plates, glasses, cutlery, and condiments
- Deciding when and how quarantine may apply to staff
  - For example, if a staff member has been in contact with an infected person
- Policies to reduce the likelihood of transmission, for example:
  - Removing magazines, booklets, menus, blankets, pillows, headphones, etc. from the carriages; and in night trains change the blankets after every single use;
  - Changing toilet paper from rolls to individual ply
  - Checking before travel starts that all staff onboard are healthy (via e.g. temperature screening);
  - Using disposable rubber or nitrile gloves to unpack deliveries;
  - Wearing single-use gloves for ticket controlling, or stop controlling tickets to avoid touching;
- Developing staff training specific to Covid-19 for example:
  - How to protect themselves;
  - How to deal with the various situations they will face in the course of their work;
  - How, to avoid discrimination, to learn appropriate gestures for taking care of a sick person (e.g. to wear a mask or not), etc.

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**Guidance on how to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces should be clearly defined.**

Some examples of preventive cleaning measures may include:

- Special cleaning of areas where passengers, public and staff are frequently present (stations, mess rooms...)
- Providing a list of surfaces presenting special risks (e.g. toilets, ticketing machines, waiting areas, windows, lockers, magazine racks, try tables, door handles/buttons, soap dispensers, arm rests, ...) and having them cleaned regularly
- Ensuring that cleaning personnel are on board during travel (not only between travels)
- Providing access to disinfectant spray to be used by the staff without restriction in those places
- How and where to dispose of biohazards (e.g. used tissues, used masks)
- Cleaning of air conditioning filters in passenger vehicles and in driving cabs

Note: Night Trains can be especially at risk. Special attention must be paid to disinfecting the compartments as people stay longer.

**A Business Continuity Plan that takes into account the special circumstances of Covid-19 (if this is not already the case) could be created to respond to the needs of social and economic life while satisfying safety requirements.**

Business Continuity Plans already created by railway companies should be applicable to the Covid-19 crisis. That said, some examples of things that may be especially relevant include:

- Reduce the work force
- Consider paying overtime
- Reduce train occupancy
- Promote telework (ensuring staff has the correct software, VPNs, teleconferencing software can handle increased workload, etc.)
- How to ensure access to medical care even if low ridership

## Provision of Material

**Which personal-protective equipment (PPE) should be made available and where should be defined** depending on the location and should be available on trains and at stations for use if an infection is suspected. This should be based on the recommendations of national authorities.

Some examples of material provision measures may include:

- A continuous monitoring of specific supplies, including a plan covering their distribution and refill.
- Defining what protection kits should include, for example:
  - Masks, single-use disposable rubber or nitrile gloves, alcohol-based gel and/or soap, biohazard bags, disinfectant spray and touch-free (non-contact infrared) thermometers;
  - Providing protection kits on board;



## 2.2 RESPONSE

### Implement the (adapted) business continuity plan

Once the crisis has begun, implement the (adapted) business continuity plan.

### Management of suspected infected passengers on railway premises

#### *In Stations and on-board trains*

Clear protocols should be in place and executed by staff for:

- How to look after staff;
  - For example, one may assign dedicated workers on site designated and trained to support staff in case the encountered suspected cases require urgent medical care
- How to detect ill travellers;
  - For example, via temperature screenings
- How to handle a suspected case, for example:
  - WHO guidelines suggest implementing preventative isolation and to keep ill persons at a distance of 1.5 meters (5 feet) from others and to disinfect the area straight away;
  - Ill travellers may be interviewed to provide authorities with a preliminary analysis of the situation;
  - How the transfer to health care premises will be undertaken;
- How staff should get in contact with the health authorities.

Most of these protocols could already have been decided upon during the preparedness phase.

### Cleaning and disinfection of railway assets

Implement the guidance on cleaning and disinfecting frequently-touched surfaces, for example:

- Continuous disinfection (Toilets, handrail, elevator button etc.);
- Deep cleaning;
- Increased frequency of cleaning and disinfection of coaches;
- Disinfection of all public places.

### Work together with cleaning providers to ensure a reinforced, coordinated response

For example, ensure that staff in charge of the cleaning are well trained to be self-protected against contaminations and to use cleaning products and processes adapted to the risk level.



## 2.3 COMMUNICATION

Alongside cooperation among relevant stakeholders, internal and external communication are the best tools to fight this kind of crisis situation. It should be highlighted that good crisis management will be greatly maximised through well-handled communication.

The spread of misinformation is more dangerous than the virus itself and can lead to panic. Fear is one of the most powerful emotions and is rapidly fed by the lack of information and inaccuracies. In order not to be anchored in collective panic, people need valid information from trusted sources. A lack of communication from relevant stakeholders can lead to the rise of fake news and even conspiracy theories. The best way to counteract rumours is to share official information from official sources, with the railway operator being considered one such source (supported by credible facts from credible sources such as the WHO). Thus, one important challenge for the railway operator is to obtain fast and reliable information from the respective national authorities and relay it to both staff and end-users.

### Internal Communication

#### Why communicate?

Internal communication is targeted at railway staff. The better informed the staff, the more likely they are to follow recommended actions and remain at their posts, limiting absenteeism. Staff also need to be able to share company policy with the public and passengers and thus need to be informed ahead of time of company policy and measures taken.

#### What to communicate?

Information which may be relevant to railway staff could include:

- Sharing information about the current situation in the country (e.g. The Public Health Authority confirms that there are X cases in our country; travel advice; chance of a new outbreak in X country)
- Informing about any special measures for cross border services
- Explaining which measures are being taken by the company to reduce risks of spreading infection
- Pre-planned questions and answers for routine questions staff may be asked by passengers and the general public
- Hygiene measures required
- How to report suspected cases of fellow staff and/or passengers
- Continual updates

#### On which channels to communicate?

Information on Covid-19 should be readily available on all communication channels regularly used by the company (e.g. social media, INTRANET, electronic screens, email, SMS, team meetings)

#### How to communicate?

Use clear, concise language

#### When to communicate?

At all stages of the crisis.

**TEMPSRÉEL**  
NUMÉRO 28 - 13 MARS 2020

**ÉPIDÉMIE COVID-19 : RENFORCEMENT DES MESURES DÉCIDÉES PAR L'ENTREPRISE À COMPTER DU LUNDI 16 MARS**

À la suite de l'allocution du président de la République le jeudi 12 mars, l'entreprise renforce les mesures pour protéger ses collaborateurs les plus «vulnérables» et limiter l'exposition au risque de l'ensemble de ses salariés.

**Pour tous, la mise en œuvre renforcée des gestes barrières constitue la meilleure protection**

Les quatre gestes barrières à adopter pour se protéger et protéger les autres :

- Se laver fréquemment les mains
- Éviter les contacts rapprochés
- Utiliser des mouchoirs à usage unique
- Tousser ou éternuer dans son coude

Les directeurs d'établissement et de site veillent à la présence continue de produits d'hygiène et de nettoyage dans les locaux.

**Organisation du travail**

- **L'organisation du travail des personnels roulants, Supg, agents Circulation et régulateurs exploitation est maintenue avec des gestes métier adaptés.**
- **Le télétravail est mis en place à chaque fois que cela est possible.** Le télétravail ciblé est également possible : une équipe travaille sur site, l'autre télétravaille, puis inversement.
- **Si le travail en présentiel est indispensable, il est demandé à chaque unité de privilégier dans la mesure du possible des équipes fixes qui ne se croisent pas (par exemple, une équipe de 4 personnes peut être décomposée en 2 équipes de 2 qui ne travaillent pas ensemble physiquement dans le même local), cette modalité permettant d'éviter le croisement des équipes lors des passes et des relèves devant également être mise en place.** Cela concerne notamment :
  - les équipes opérationnelles des commandes de personnel roulant et de la Supg
  - les centres opérationnels / postes

**d'aiguillage, centres opérationnels des activités, CNCF, centres sous-station, FCNS, ...**

- les autres services indispensables aux opérations services horaires : B&R, conception des rames,
- selon leurs missions, les centres de gestion des gabarits d'information indispensables à la gestion du trafic et aux transactions (transitaires Supg, motrices, réservation...)

**Il appartient à chaque directeur d'arrêter de définir les modalités de mise en œuvre de ces directives.**

- Les fonctions de pilotage et de coordination nécessaires pour assurer le continuité de service seront définies durant le week-end au sein de chaque unité. Pour les avertis, il convient de constituer des binômes et d'arrêter autant que possible la présence simultanée dans un même lieu.
- **Pour les personnes déclarées vulnérables, par avis motivé du médecin du travail, une solution adaptée doit être trouvée par l'établissement en accord avec le médecin ; adaptation du poste et/ou des horaires de travail ou télétravail.**
- **Dans le cadre de la fermeture des établissements scolaires et crèches, les salariés qui travaillent peu d'heure possèdent de garde de leur enfant (moins de 16 ans), doivent informer 48 heures à l'avance leur manager de cette situation. Le formulaire dédié prévu à cet effet (déclaration individuelle d'intention d'absence pour garde d'enfant) est disponible auprès des pôles RH.** Il est rappelé l'interdiction de faire rentrer les enfants dans les établissements et locaux.

TEMPSRÉEL - DIRECTION DE LA COMMUNICATION ET DE LA MARQUE  
DIRECTION DE LA MARQUE - DÉPARTEMENT RECHERCHE

**TEMPSRÉEL**  
NUMÉRO 28 - 13 MARS 2020

**Mesures sanitaires**

- Toute personne fébrile (plus de 38°) doit s'abstenir de venir au travail et prendre contact avec un médecin.
- **Pour la protection des salariés au contact des clients, les gestes métiers sont adaptés selon les directives de chacun des métiers et activités.**

**Réunions**

- **Les réunions en présentiel doivent être limitées au strict minimum.** Celles devant se tenir en présentiel pour répondre à des obligations légales ou réglementaires sont limitées à 20 personnes.
- **La règle est de tenir les réunions à distance, par tout moyen technique disponible.**
- Les formations qui ne pourraient respecter les deux critères indiqués ci-dessus doivent être reportées.
- Sauf exception motivée par le directeur d'unité, les réunions avec les consultants ou prestataires doivent se faire à distance.

**Déplacements**

- **Tous les déplacements professionnels restent interdits dans les zones d'exposition au risque Covid-19 et fortement déconseillés hors de France.** En cas d'absence nécessaire, l'accord du directeur de l'unité est nécessaire.
- En France, les déplacements professionnels doivent être limités au strict nécessaire. Les réunions de type Skype ou téléconférence sont à privilégier.
- **Visiteurs dans les locaux**
- La présence des visiteurs extérieurs est limitée au strict nécessaire.

**Je remercie chacun d'entre vous pour votre engagement en cette période difficile. Mes salutations et mon soutien tout en œuvrant pour assurer la protection de nos collaborateurs et être au rendez-vous de notre mission de service public, essentielle pour le pays en cette période.**  
Jean Pierre Farandou, président-directeur général de la SNCF.

TEMPSRÉEL - DIRECTION DE LA COMMUNICATION ET DE LA MARQUE  
DIRECTION DE LA MARQUE - DÉPARTEMENT RECHERCHE

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## External Communication

### Why communicate?

External communication is targeted at railway passengers and the general public. Railway undertakings and infrastructure managers are viewed as trustworthy, reliable sources by the public and as such there is an expectation for information to be shared. Meeting this expectation helps to combat the spread of misinformation & rumours and also to maintain corporate reputation both during and after a crisis event. Thus, one important challenge for the railway operator is to obtain fast and reliable information from the respective national authorities and relay it to both staff and end-users.

### What to communicate?

Types of information railway undertakings and infrastructure managers might be expected to provide to the public and passengers could include:

- Providing simple means for the public to become part of the solution:
  - Stay at home if you are sick;
  - Use of the flexed elbow method to cough;
  - Clean hands with soap and water or with alcoholic-based gel (ensure availability);
  - Take social distancing measures;
- Explanation of Covid-19 symptoms
- Encourage customers to use online ticket purchasing (to avoid gathering in the railway station ticket offices)
- A clear cancellation policy (refund or exchange)
- Stating what clients should do if symptoms appear during their travel
- Sharing information about the current situation in the country
- Informing on any special measures for cross border services
- Providing information on who to contact for medical advice
- Reassuring users of the railway system as to the additional/reinforced cleaning regimes in place (e.g. what time the cleaning person passed)

### On which channels to communicate?

In a crisis, people tend to use the same communication means that they use in their everyday life and thus information on Covid-19 should be readily available on all communication channels regularly used by the company (website, social media, apps, in station announcements, via press releases, etc.).

### How to communicate?

At a general level, visual communication (infographics, videos and pictograms) is recommended. Visual communication helps to avoid language and other functional needs barriers. They can be provided by the National Authorities or International Health Organisations (WHO or ECDC<sup>2</sup>). For example, cartoons depicting how to cover one's mouth when sneezing or coughing using the elbow technique are particularly relevant to the Covid-19 outbreak.

It is also recommended to use easy to understand language (use laypeople's language and not technical terms), be concise, and adapt communication to people with specific special needs (deaf, blind, etc.). Collaboration with national associations of people with reduced mobility and special needs is strongly recommended.

When using social media, keep in mind relevant hashtags. Examples currently (12/03/2020) trending on twitter include #covid\_19, #CoronavirusPandemic, #COVID19. Sometimes a location is added to a hashtag when relevant, for example #covid19fr is trending in France.

### When to communicate?

During all stages of the crisis.

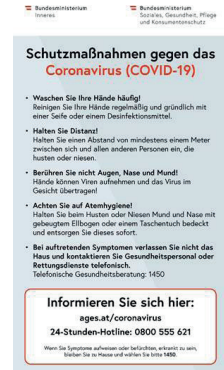
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2 WHO: World Health Organization, ECDC: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

## 2.4 EXAMPLES OF COMMUNICATION MATERIAL FROM UIC MEMBERS

Below, some examples of communication materials used by UIC members to increase awareness of staff and the public.

### Austria



### Canada



### Denmark



### France





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## 3. CASE STUDIES AND PRACTICES

All practices collected by UIC are available on the dedicated Covid-19 workspace at: <https://extranet.uic.org/>

As well as the UIC mediacenter at: <https://mediacenter.uic.org/>

For now, contributions have been sent by Railway Companies from all over the world, including Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, South Korea, Spain, the Netherlands and the United States of America.

## 4. ETHICAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

All measures should be developed within the framework of national rules and regulations and taking into account national and corporate ethical considerations.

In Europe, normally both PRR (Passenger Rail Rights) & GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) are especially relevant, however the full application of these regulations could be affected by the Covid-19 crisis.

**CONTACT: COVID19@UIC.ORG**

**www.uic.org**



**#UICrail**

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## 6. ANNEX

UIC, together with UIC Special Group COLPOFER, developed a questionnaire regarding the measures that have been put in place in different companies.

- **1. Which Public Authorities in your country are involved in the management of the Covid-19 outbreak?**
- **2. Which obligations have been issued by your National Public Authorities on railway transportation?**
- **3. Which measures have you adopted to prevent Covid-19 spreading:**
  - on board? (e.g. hand sanitising dispensers, waterproof rubbish bags, further sanitising intervention from cleaning companies)
  - in stations? (e.g. hand sanitising dispensers, waterproof rubbish bags, , temperature monitoring)
  - in critical sites (e.g. Railway Traffic Circulation Control Rooms)? (e.g. sanitation protocols, working space segregation)
  - in HQs? (e.g. creation of a specific task force and Covid-19 protocols, specific access regulations, teleworking, meeting organisation rules)
  - for front-line staff? (e.g. operational guidelines, provision of specific personal protective equipment)
  - among all your staff? (e.g. teleworking, limited travel)
- **4. Which procedures have you adopted for dealing with Covid-19 suspected cases?**
  - on board? (e.g. communication with Public Health Authorities and Law Enforcement)?
  - in station? (e.g. communication with Public Health Authorities and Law Enforcement, temporary isolation, sanitation protocols)?
  - in railway premises? (e.g. disinfection protocols, co-workers of the suspected case support)
  - amongst Railway Traffic Circulation Control Rooms' staff? (Please give a brief description of the business continuity plan)
- **5. Passengers awareness**
  - Which suggestions or advice have you given to railway passengers (e.g. general health advices from Public Health Authorities, use of online ticket selling channels)?
  - Please send us examples of communication material used to raise awareness among railway passengers (e.g. posters, leaflets of recommendations, short videos)
  - Which information channels do you use? (e.g. station displays and displays on trains (including international sign language for cross border connections), voice communication in station and into the trains, social networks)?
- **6. Staff awareness**
  - Please send us examples of communication material used to raise awareness among staff (e.g. poster, leaflets of recommendations, videos, tutorials)
  - How do you update your staff in real time on the topic (for example train staff)?
- **7. Open suggestion**
  - Please indicate any information/best practice regarding railway transportation not mentioned in the previous questions.



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