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Top SŽDC Representative Appeals to Carriers about Increased Passage of Ride-Forbidding Signal

Mr. Jiří Svoboda, Director General of SŽDC, is concerned by a high number of cases when trains pass a ride-forbidding signal. That is why he sent today a letter to carriers operating on the Czech railway in which he appealed to their employees to observe the respective SŽDC regulation.

"I am very concerned by this increase of such exceptional events as it could represent a significant peril to railway operation and transport safety. The current trend can lead up to a lower prestige of railway transport which is based in the first instance on its safety in comparison with other modes of transport", states Mr. Svoboda in his letter.

As he adds, 57 such cases already occurred during the period since 1 January to 28 May 2018 on lines operated by SŽDC. In comparison to the same period from the two previous years, these cases' occurrence increased by one fourth. Mr. Svoboda calls this situation alarming and unsustainable for any longer.

As the letter also states, 17 people in total were injured during exceptional events related to a railway vehicle's prohibited ride past a ride-forbidding signal, from which injuries were qualified as serious in four cases; other injuries could be averted in many cases by pure luck only.

"Investigations having been carried out demonstrated that the unfavourable trend described above is not caused by insufficient safeguarding by technical infrastructure components or by a change of regulations. The majority of defaults were caused by an operation and technological lack of discipline by persons involved in driving railway vehicles who did not observe respective rules and regulations. This caused e.g. that a railway vehicle did not brake or a signal during a train ride or shunting was not respected", states the SŽDC top representative.

In the following lines, Mr. Svoboda appeals to the carriers: *"Based on facts mentioned above, I ask from you that all provisions of SŽDC Regulation D1 are fully observed during railway operation and that all your employees in operation, training and control pay due attention to these. In order to improve the current extremely unsatisfactory situation, it is necessary that you use all options provided by your internal regulations relating to the system of ensuring railway operation safety, especially by adopting system measures oriented on improving the quality of work of employees involved in driving railway vehicles".*

As Mr. Svoboda adds, if it be to the contrary, SŽDC would be obliged in cooperation with the respective administration bodies to apply other means to secure unconditionally all requirements and conditions resulting from the provisions of Article 34h of the Rail Systems Act to ensure railway operation safety.

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