

**BRANCH LIAISON OFFICER**

**Irene Rabbitts, 34 Victory Park Road, Addlestone, Surrey KT15 2AZ**

**Telephone: 01932 855015**

**e-mail: [liaison@rcts.org.uk](mailto:liaison@rcts.org.uk)**

---

## **Officers' Newsletter 226**

1 December 2023

### **Society Insurance cover**

This requires an **URGENT** response.

It is the time of year when we need to renew the Society's insurance policy which, amongst other things, provides cover for Branch equipment. It is worthwhile as can be confirmed by the Branch that had to put in a claim for replacing their digital projector earlier this year. The claim was successful.

I appreciate that I ask you to let me know when your Branch purchases and/or replaces equipment as and when it happens, and most of you do so, but I also know that this information is not always provided at the time of purchase or disposal. So please let me have an up to date list of what digital equipment is held by your branch – eg laptop, digital projector, PA or sound system etc now. If you have no such equipment, please confirm this too. If we do not provide the correct information to the insurance company, losses may not be fully covered.

### **New Membership Application Form**

There is a new membership application form available and this should be used from now on. Any copies of earlier forms should be disposed of and recycled. The new form is available using the link:

<https://rcts.org.uk/join-2024/>

### **Health & Safety Policy, and Guidance**

The Society has a new Health and Safety Policy which is accessible on the public pages of the website using the link <https://rcts.org.uk/society/#governance> .

There is guidance to go with the policy – also available on the website - is included as Appendix 1 of this Officers' Newsletter.

---

The information contained in this newsletter is for use of RCTS Officers and Members only and should not be communicated outside of the Society

A Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered with The Charity Commission. Registered number

1169995

1 of 6

## **Word and PowerPoint Templates**

New and updated Word and PowerPoint templates are now available on the website. They can easily be downloaded using the link <https://members.rcts.org.uk/#guidance> and should be used from now on for Branch activities, correspondence etc. **Please read the guidance first.** You should discard any old templates etc that you may have.

This is all about providing a consistent and professional look for the Society.

## **RCTS Flyers and Plastic Bags**

There are a number of flyers available for use by Branches and other Society Officers for publicity and recruitment as appropriate. Some are currently being reviewed whilst the following are available on request:

RCTS 6 Leatherhead Library – available by emailing [archive@rcts.org.uk](mailto:archive@rcts.org.uk)

RCTS 13 Publications – available by emailing [publications@rcts.org.uk](mailto:publications@rcts.org.uk)

RCTS Profile – available by emailing [liaison@rcts.org.uk](mailto:liaison@rcts.org.uk)

RCTS Wills and Bequests leaflet – publicised in Officers' Newsletter 215 and can be accessed via the website <https://rcts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/web/Wills-Bequests-Leaflet-V3.0-2022.pdf>

Plastic bags with the Society logo are available from the Membership Secretary by emailing [membership@rcts.org.uk](mailto:membership@rcts.org.uk).

## **Publicising Events in the Railway Press**

I am pleased to confirm that Roger Sandford has now taken over the role of Publicity Communications formerly carried out by Ronnie McAdam and very kindly covered by Keith Merritt after Ronnie had to retire from the post. I know Roger has already contacted Branch Secretaries to let them know so this is confirmation of the change. Roger can be contacted by emailing [chichesterchair@rcts.org.uk](mailto:chichesterchair@rcts.org.uk)

## **Regional Meetings Summary and Précis**

I had hoped to include both in this Officers' Newsletter but there is already enough for you to take note of so it is planned that they will appear in the next one.

Thank you for reading the newsletter and I hope you find it useful.

Kind regards

Irene

## Appendix 1

# Health & Safety – Guidance for RCTS activities

## Overview

It is essential that everyone involved in RCTS activities keeps in mind their legal and moral responsibility to take care of themselves and others at all times, not allowing themselves or others with whom they are interacting to be placed in any danger.

Activities can be wide-ranging - including regular Branch indoor meetings, national and regional meetings, outside visits, overseas tours. Potential risks should be identified and, where required, mitigating measures put in place that reduce such risks to as low as is reasonably possible.

Detailed guidance on arranging Branch meetings, outside activities and exhibitions can be found in the Officers' Handbook. This guidance is intended for use alongside the RCTS Health & Safety Policy and the Officers' Handbook, and should be applied to **ALL** RCTS activities.

## Risk Assessments and Mitigation Measures

Risk assessments should be sensible and proportionate to the level of risk involved in the activity. A sensible approach means focusing on significant risks with potential to cause real harm and suffering.

Identify hazards at RCTS events/activities; assess the risks – how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how seriously; take action to eliminate the hazard or, if this is not possible, control/mitigate the risks; record the findings; review the controls.

## Indoor Meetings

These are usually held on premises owned and/or managed by other parties; it is important that the specific health and safety requirements of those organisations or individuals are ascertained before any booking is made on behalf of the RCTS and, if the requirements are deemed acceptable, then those responsible must ensure that these requirements are met by all those attending the meeting.

A risk assessment of the premises should be carried out, reviewed periodically for regular meetings, and a template risk assessment form is attached as **Appendix 1** - to be adapted to the circumstances as required. Much is common sense, but keeping a record is essential. Risks and mitigations can be as simple as making sure that cables for audio/visual equipment and laptops are not a trip hazard. Health and safety actions (eg risk assessments) should be raised at the Branch AGM and recorded in the minutes or in the committee reports. Branch committees and other Society organisers should also keep a record of any discussions regarding health and safety in the minutes of their meetings.

Organisers should make sure that they have a clear plan of what to do and who is responsible for what in the event of an emergency evacuation of the building. It is good practice to announce this at the start of a meeting so that everyone present knows what to do. Asking everyone to sign in at meetings makes it easier for organisers to account for those present should there be an emergency evacuation.

## **Outdoor Activities**

### **Within the UK**

These can take several forms such as visits to museums, heritage railways and operational railway establishments or observation days spent on station platforms or organised holidays visiting foreign railways etc. Each will have been the responsibility of one or more RCTS members to organise and these individuals must take care to ensure that the particular activity is planned, advertised and conducted in accordance with the requirements set out in the RCTS Health & Safety (H&S) Policy.

For visits to UK railway-related sites, such as those listed in the preceding paragraph, it is important to ascertain beforehand what H&S policy may have already been established by the owners or operators at these locations and to what extent that policy might affect the RCTS visitors. If required, a pre-entry safety briefing should be given – preferably by an appropriate representative from the owners or operators of that site. All those participating in the RCTS-organised visit must adhere to whatever instructions are given at such briefings and, of course, take care of themselves and look-out for those around them.

### **Overseas**

Any organiser of a Society-based tour must advise all participants to take out sufficient travel insurance before departure. Details of emergency contacts back in the UK should be obtained but, in accordance with UK GDPR legislation, this information should be destroyed upon the safe return of the RCTS party to the UK.

Just as in the UK, foreign railways and related establishments have strict H&S policies in place. The organiser(s) of RCTS tours/holidays must endeavour, as far as reasonably practical, to ascertain whether there are any significant details which should be passed on to the others in the party. Nevertheless, it remains a strict requirement that everyone participating in such tours must behave safely and follow any specific instructions given by officials as appropriate.

## **What you must do – as an individual**

You must take care of your own health and safety and that of others who may be harmed by your actions.

You must abide by the RCTS Health & Safety Policy and Guidance and obey and safety instructions given at a safety briefing on outside activities.

You should not do anything to interfere with or misuse equipment provided for reasons of health, safety and welfare eg fire extinguishers, high visibility clothing, hard hats etc.

## **How to raise any concerns**

If you are concerned about health and safety risks to you as an individual, talk to:

- 1 any member of your Branch Committee;
- 2 the event organiser;
- 3 the RCTS Secretary

## **Other Issues**

Society Rule 9 requires *'everyone undertaking Society visits, that they shall abide by the requirements (as advised) of appropriate safety legislation and must obey the directions given by leaders of the party and by any appointed guide or representative(s) of the authority granting the visit. Failure to behave in a safe fashion or obey these instructions will lead to a report being placed before the BoT, which may result in expulsion of the member concerned, with forfeiture of membership.'*

This H&S Guidance is a 'living' document and will be revised whenever necessary. Any member is welcome to propose improvements or to query items which might cause confusion. Please contact the Head of the Administration Group (email: [secretary@rcts.org.uk](mailto:secretary@rcts.org.uk)) with your suggestions and comments.

## **Useful Sources of Information**

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) - <https://www.hse.gov.uk>

National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) - [www.ncvo.org.uk](http://www.ncvo.org.uk)

Appendix 1  
**Risk assessment template**

Railway Correspondence and Travel Society Assessment carried out by:

Date of next review:

Date assessment was carried out:

| What are the hazards? | Who might be harmed and how? | What are you already doing to control the risks? | What further action do you need to take to control the risks? | Who needs to carry out the action? | When is the action needed by? | Done |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------|
|                       |                              |                                                  |                                                               |                                    |                               |      |
|                       |                              |                                                  |                                                               |                                    |                               |      |
|                       |                              |                                                  |                                                               |                                    |                               |      |
|                       |                              |                                                  |                                                               |                                    |                               |      |
|                       |                              |                                                  |                                                               |                                    |                               |      |
|                       |                              |                                                  |                                                               |                                    |                               |      |

More information on managing risk: [www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/)

Published by the Health and Safety Executive

10/19