

# SafetyFirst

Spring 2025



## UPDATED SENTINEL SCHEME RULES

Understand the key responsibilities for swiping in and out with a Sentinel card under the updated 2025 Scheme Rules

## FATIGUE AWARENESS

Learn why managing fatigue and monitoring alertness are critical for safety in the rail industry

## CBD OIL AND CBD

Be aware of the risks CBD oil may pose to drug testing and safety, even when bought legally in the UK





## Welcome to the Spring edition of Ganymede's Safety First Newsletter

Spring is upon us - longer daylight hours and dare I say, warmer weather! It's that time of year when we get that feel-good factor and look forward to some well-deserved holidays.

This time last year I mentioned the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Health and Safety at Work Act (HASAWA) and how critical it has been in delivering vast improvements to workplace safety, health and wellbeing.

This year, I'd like to share another milestone - this one a little more personal. Yours truly has now completed 45 years in the rail industry, having started my career back in 1979 on British Rail. It's been quite a journey, one that's seen many changes, especially in technology, health and safety. But sadly, one thing I haven't seen change enough is our workplace culture.

From the start, the mindset has often been to simply get the job done—driven by tight schedules, possession deadlines, isolations, and pressure to keep trains running. This created what many on the frontline call a 'job and knock' culture.

Rail safety has come a long way. Track safety improved significantly with the introduction of risk minimisation in 2002 and standards like 019. Yet I remember the same mindset in my time on the tools and in other roles: work faster, even if it meant using the wrong tools or cutting corners. Most of the time, it went unnoticed—but sometimes, someone got hurt.

As an investigator, I still see these behaviours. Unsafe acts are often learned from more experienced colleagues. While accidents can stem from genuine errors, it's the deliberate shortcuts that concern me most. These well-meaning actions reflect deep-rooted habits. Progress shows change is possible—but shifting the mindset remains the real challenge.

### Documents and Forms – Importance of completion

In this edition of Safety First we're covering a few incident failures around Safe Systems of Work and the Safe Work Pack documentation – or as most call it, the 'paperwork'.

This paperwork must be completed by persons carrying out 'in charge' roles notably rule book duties of PICOPs, ESs, COSSs, Nominated Persons and Machine Controllers. Documents like Record of Arrangements, Briefings/Checklists, Engineering Certificates and Permits to work must be completed correctly and in full in accordance with the Rule Book and Standards.

Unfortunately, this doesn't always happen. I want to reiterate just how important these documents are. They are not just a record of the duties you are carrying out, they're also legal documents with unique industry numbers, and they'll be used as evidence in the event of an accident or incident.

Completing these documents is a critical part of your role, and it ensures the safety critical information is clearly passed on to others.

### Test before Touch

There have been several events reported on the failure to Test Before Touch and Test Before Applying Earths and it is difficult to understand why these steps are still being missed. Anyone responsible for arranging isolations or carrying out work requiring an isolation must follow these Life Saving Rules.

No matter what role or capacity you are working in, make sure these tests are carried out – they are paramount to everyone's safety.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition. Please remember, the articles included are for your benefit - to keep you updated on the latest events and offer guidance around safety, health and wellbeing.

If there are topics you'd like to see covered or ideas you'd like to put forward, don't hesitate to get in touch.

As always, please take care, and remember to speak up and voice your concerns if you have any concerns about your own or your colleague's safety.



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## Lessons Learnt

We would like to draw your attention to a couple of protection irregularities that have occurred involving Ganymede Protection Controllers taking line blockages on our client worksites. Remember a Protection Controller is appointed if there are two or more COSSs or IWA's who need a line blockage at the same place and same time, a Protection Controller (PC) must be appointed to take overall control of the shared line blockage.

### PC Protection Irregularity at Westbury - What Happened?

The Protection Controller arranged the pre-planned Line Blockage with additional protection (Detonators) on the Up and Down Line at Westbury North Junction with the Signaller. The detonator protection was placed by two competent persons utilised at the arranged blocking points.

The PC had the call from the Signaller requesting the lines to be handed back slightly early, the PC started the process of handing back the lines and had called the Competent Person positioned on the Down Line to remove the protection, but forgot to inform the Competent Person positioned on the Up Line to remove the protection. This resulted in the line blockage being handed back with the protection still in place and the train in question came into contact with the detonator protection.

### Lessons Learnt

Stop Boards and Detonators are a popular method of additional protection used for line blockages due to the complexity of other methods such as disconnections or TCODs. However, there is the added risk of utilising a Competent Person to place them in the right position and ensuring their removal when required. On this occasion the PC forgot to contact the Competent Person to remove the detonator protection, this can be put down to a slip/lapse of the individual.

Remember when taking line blockages use your record of arrangements form in your Safe Work Pack as the guidance process for taking and giving up the line blockage, that includes the placing and removal of the additional protection used to help you complete the required line blockage process in full.





## PC Protection Irregularity at Grove Park - What Happened

The Protection Controller arranged the pre-planned line blockage at Grove Park Station for various work activities to take place. Several COSSs were booked into the line blockage to carry out the planned works. It was when the PC was handing back the line blockage that the Signaller drew his attention to the fact that the track circuits were still occupied on the line concerned. The PC made further enquiries and established there was a group still working on the line and the COSS hadn't booked out of the line blockage due to the PC failing to contact him. The PC then ensured the group were clear before eventually handing the line blockage back to the Signaller.

### Lessons Learnt

The signalling systems alerted the Signaller that the line wasn't clear when the PC attempted to hand back the line blockage. The PC assumed he had contacted all the COSSs but had missed one out, and again a slip/lapse of an individual not managing the process accordingly was identified. He did have several COSSs to contact but the importance of recording information and following the process on giving up a line blockage is critical to ensure all working groups are clear of the line.

Both events are under investigation, and we will await recommendations, fortunately there were no injuries sustained from these irregularities, but it could have resulted in more serious consequences. However, in both incidents it proves that additional protection methods are critical when planning and implementing line blockages. Also, the completion of the NR3180 Line Blockage Arrangements form must be carried out, always followed and referred to.





# Spotlight on Safety

## Sentinel Scheme Rules – Sentinel Card Swipe in/Swipe out

Version 5 of the Sentinel Scheme Rules came into force in March 2025 and we would like to make you aware of your responsibilities as a Sponsored Individual regarding your Sentinel card:

- 3.4.2 The individual shall always carry their Sentinel card (virtual or physical) while working on Managed Infrastructure.
- 3.4.3 All individuals shall provide their Sentinel card (virtual or physical) for swipe in before they undertake work on the Managed Infrastructure.

Please ensure you have your card (virtual or physical) ready for swiping when accessing site and reporting for duty. Always remember to swipe out at the end of your shift.

[Access the full Sentinel rules here](#)

## HAVS Awareness

We need to monitor your wellbeing to ensure that any activities you undertake on behalf of Ganymede do not affect your health or worsen any pre-existing condition. There are several industrial diseases that are irreversible such as Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (also known as white finger), Industrial Deafness and Lung function.

Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome is a disorder from prolonged usage of vibrating tools. Below are key messages we would like you to take on board especially if you do carry out operations that require you to use power operated tools.



## Key Message

Symptoms may start with tingling sensations but can progress to numbness. Symptoms can continue after the use of vibrating tools has finished.

- Ensure tools are in good working order, use lower vibrating tools where possible, keep hands warm and dry, take regular breaks and avoid continuous exposure.
- HAVS is preventable, but once the damage is done, it is permanent.
- HAVS is serious and disabling, and nearly 2 million people are at risk.
- Damage from HAVS can include the inability to do fine work and cold can trigger painful finger blanching attacks.

Hand arm vibration can be a significant health risk wherever powered hand tools are used for significant lengths of time.

Please speak up if you have any concerns or develop any symptoms of this irreversible disease. If you have any doubts when operating power driven tools or are worried about over exposure, you must speak to the PIC on site and inform your Ganymede Line Manager. Ganymede do arrange annual occupational health assessments for all track workers, but you must inform us immediately if you do have any symptoms of HAVS or any concerns regarding your health and wellbeing.

## Louise Parker Joining the HSEQ Team

We would like to welcome a new member of staff to the HSEQ Team.

Louise Parker has joined us as a Workforce Champion, with her primary role focused on the behaviours of our workers when carrying out their duties and trying to change the culture that continually evolves within the rail industry.

The Workforce Champion project has proved successful in the Kent and Sussex area due to the application and dedication of the team forming trusting relationships with their colleagues on site.

Louise will be based within our Ashford office and will have a learning programme mapped out to help her gain professional qualifications to achieve safety advisor status and start her journey into a HSEQ career.

Louise will regularly be on site, and I am sure will approach you for a chat and share safety information and conversations with you all. Please take out time to engage with her when on site.





# Life Saving Rules Test before applying Earths and Test before Touch

Recently there have been several DC Conductor Rail Isolation Irregularities with behavioural causes identified, including the failure to carry out live line testing. We remind you that you must test the conductor rails before applying earths when carrying out DC conductor rail strapping duties and also test before touch if you hold COSS CRP/LLT and receive a conductor rail permit before starting work. These actions are critical to yours and your colleague's safety.

## Working responsibly



Always be sure the required plans and permits are in place, before you start a job or go on or near the line.



Always use the equipment that is fit for its intended purpose



Never undertake any job unless you have been trained and assessed as competent.



Never work or drive while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

## Working with Electricity



Always test before applying earths or straps.



Never assume equipment is isolated – always test before touch.

## Driving



Never use a hand-held or hands-free phone, or programme any other mobile device, while driving.



Always obey the speed limit and wear a seat belt.

## Working at height



Always use a safety harness when working at height, unless other protection is in place.

## Working with moving equipment



Never enter the agreed exclusion zone, unless directed to by the person in charge.



## Safe Work Packs

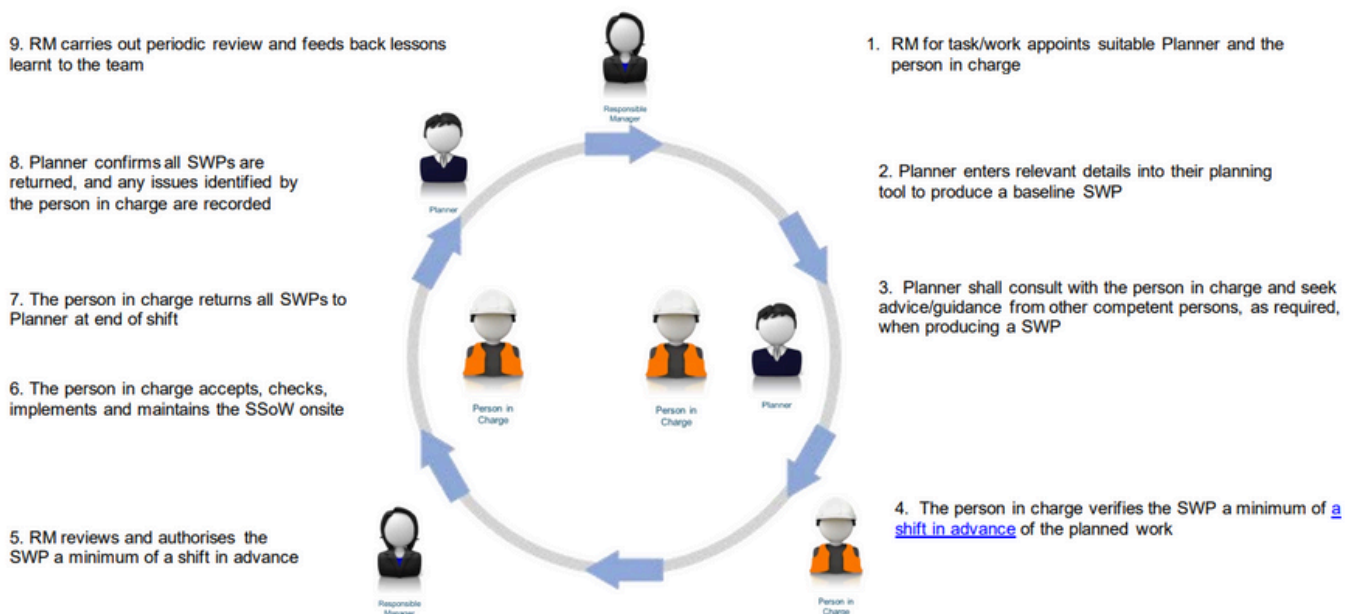
There have been several issues with Safe Work Packs over the last few months, where they have not been checked within the timescale required and where issues have not been raised with the Planner in advance, causing issues at the start of the shift.

Please remember that if you have not received your pack in good time, please chase it up with the planner and let your local office know.

When you receive your pack, take some time to read and verify the information. If there are any changes required, the pack needs to be returned to the Planner to make the changes are made before it is returned to you to verify.

The pack needs to be verified at least a shift in advance (this is on or before your last working day before the work is due to commence), this gives time for any changes to be made and for authorisation.

As a PIC/COSS you must follow the process for the verification, acceptance and implementation of the planned safe system of work and the return of the SWP to the planner. See below the planning cycle overview:



Remember if you are The Person in Charge:

- You are accountable for your own safety and the safety of all persons in your work group, this includes the risk of being struck by trains and the risks associated with the task and location.
- You must hold one of the following competencies: COSS, or when working alone, IWA - as a minimum.
- You retain accountability for safety at a site of work and have the final decision as to whether a safe work pack is acceptable before it is implemented.

Remember to ensure the Safe Work Pack is returned to the Planner at the end of each shift by the agreed process.

**You can access the 019 Standard on the [Safety and Wellbeing Hub](#) section our website.**



## Close Call Winners

Congratulations to **Tariq Mushtaq** from our North and Midlands team, for being alert and taking action by contacting the British Transport Police on two separate occasions.

- The first was when he observed someone on the track attempting to steal copper from a cable troughing route.
- The second was when he witnessed someone throwing a bag from a bridge onto the track.

On both occasions, **Tariq** promptly contacted the British Transport Police, and in both cases, the perpetrators were arrested. The bag thrown onto the track was found to contain a knife and other contraband items.

Well done and thank you, **Tariq** for your brave actions which possibly stopped the danger to any passing trains but also prevented these trespasses coming into contact with any passing trains which could have resulted in fatal consequences.



**Tariq Mushtaq, Track Operative for North and Midlands**

Well done to **Ray Couldridge** from our Ashford office. Ray carries out Engineering Supervisor duties at London Bridge in what is a very busy complex area of Network Rail.

While carrying out this busy challenging role Ray acts in a professional manner and has formed very good working relationships with staff from Network Rail, Ganymede and the many contractors that book into his site every night.

Since the turn of the year Ray has raised 8 close calls around planning, safe work packs, protection equipment and PPE, the close calls raised have made a difference and have been actioned accordingly putting safety first. Well done Ray for the positive close calls you have raised that have made a difference within London Bridge.



**Louise Parker, Workforce Champion and Ray Couldridge, Engineering Supervisor at London Bridge**

### Well done to Mikey

A voucher was also presented to **Mikey Jones** from our Abercynon office. Mikey who is the Team Leader of one of our track gangs decided to support Movember an annual event involving the growing of moustaches during the month of November to raise awareness of Men's Health issues.

Mikey encouraged the other workers in his team to grow their moustaches and raised £330 which he donated to Railway Children a charity that supports children alone and at risk on the streets and transport hubs in the UK, India and Tanzania. Again, well done to Mikey and his team for a lifesaving donation for a very good cause.





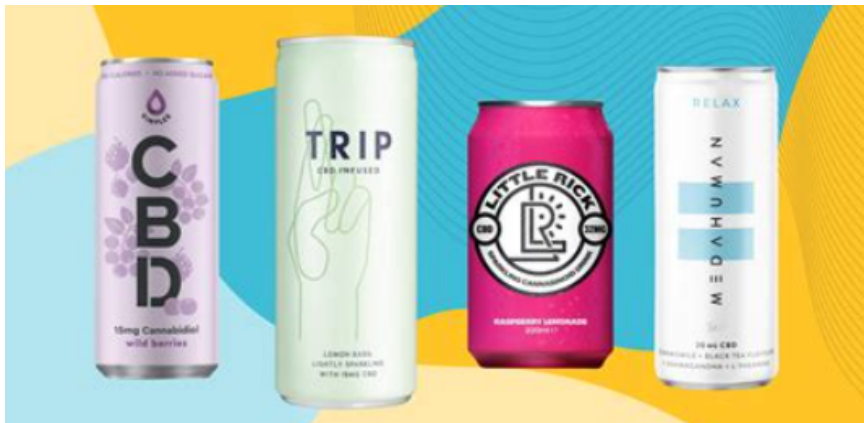
## CBD Oil and CBD

CBD (cannabidiol) oil is extracted from strains of the cannabis plant and is legally sold in the UK as a food supplement for drinks, use in oils and vapes.

To be sold legally in the UK, CBD products must contain less than 0.2% tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the chemical in cannabis that makes you 'high'. However, the THC content can vary among products. Recent studies have shown evidence that CBD oil purchased from reputable retail shops, such as Holland and Barrett, may still contain trace amounts of THC.

Using CBD products that are purchased from a reputable UK supplier that contain low levels of THC does not guarantee a negative Drugs and Alcohol (D&A) test. If a positive D&A test occurs, it will be treated the same as a non-negative result for any other prohibited substance. This may lead to being "stood down" from duty while awaiting laboratory analysis and a medical review with the potential for dismissal.

Rail employees considering using CBD oil or other unlicensed preparations should consult their GP first. If you work in a safety critical role, you have additional responsibilities for the safety of others. Even trace amounts of THC can impair your performance and may be detectable in drugs tests, so it's important to carefully consider the risks before using CBD oil as a food supplement.



The Ganymede team strongly advises that employees do not use CBD oil in any form. Even trace amounts of THC in CBD products can result in a positive drug test, leading to potential consequences, including being stood down from duty and further disciplinary actions.

For the safety and well-being of our workforce, we recommend avoiding CBD oil altogether.





## Waste Update – Recycling

Please be aware that, as of the end of March, the new **Simpler Recycling regulations** have come into force in England. These rules affect workplaces and require employers to separate waste into the following categories:

- Dry recyclables (plastic, metal, glass, paper, and card)
- Food waste
- Non-recyclable waste

When working, please respect clients' recycling facilities and use them correctly.

These regulations already apply to businesses in Wales and Scotland. The Simpler Recycling rules will be extended to households in England from March 2026, so look out for updates from your local council.



## Prostate awareness

March was Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, but we felt it was still a good idea to pass on some information that might help make a difference. In the UK about 1 in 8 men are diagnosed with it each year, for black men the rate is 1 in 4.

Symptoms of prostate cancer can include:

- Needing to pee more often than usual, especially at night
- Difficulty peeing – for example, a weak flow or having to strain to start peeing
- Feeling like you have not completely emptied your bladder
- An urgent need to pee
- Blood in your urine or semen
- Rarely, pain when peeing or ejaculating.

If you have any of these symptoms, it is important to have them checked by your doctor. Symptoms typically occur when the cancer – or an enlarged prostate gland (non-cancerous) – is large enough to press on the tube that carries the urine from the bladder. In its early stages it may not cause any symptoms.

If you notice any symptoms please go and visit your GP, for more information [please see this leaflet from Cancer Research](#).



# Fatigue Awareness in the Rail Industry

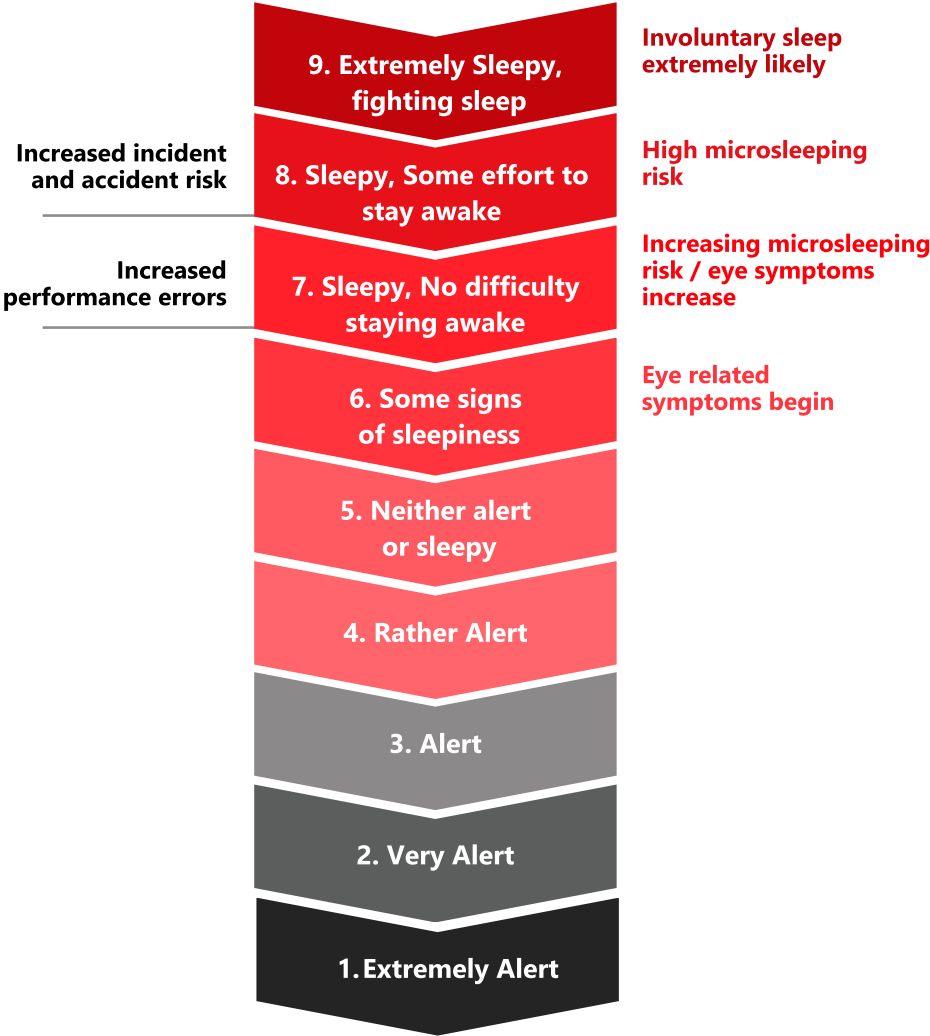
Fatigue is one of the major risks within the rail industry, with shift work and work continuity posing significant challenges. Ensuring that everyone is aware of the signs of fatigue and how to manage it has been the focus of our **Safety Moment events** and newsletters.

It's essential that individuals feel comfortable speaking up if they are experiencing fatigue, as this is crucial to both our business operations and the safety of our workforce.

We are conducting a Fatigue Survey to better understand how work patterns impact your health, safety and wellbeing. Please scan the QR code below or [click here](#) to take part. Your honest feedback is important and will help us make improvements where needed.

The industry may also shift towards focusing more on alertness rather than just fatigue. When you arrive for a shift, you may be asked to consider your current level of alertness. One tool that can help with this is the Karolinska Sleepiness Scale, developed by the Karolinska Institute in Sweden to assess alertness and sleepiness in different settings.

Take a moment to review the scale and reflect on where you currently stand.



Scan here to access the fatigue survey!



## Raynes Park Careers Carousel

As part of the Southern Rail Enterprise and Volker Rail partnership, Ganymede was invited to take part in a careers carousel at Raynes Park High School in London, alongside other suppliers. This event provided an opportunity to present information to Year 9 students about the various jobs and apprenticeships available within the rail and construction industries. The goal was to introduce them to companies working in these sectors and showcase academic pathways into the industry.

Dean Frost, Tyler Cook, and Tom Cleverley attended the event, setting up a Ganymede stand where students could ask questions about who we are, our role in the project, and the various positions we cover.

**Tom said:**



*It was a great opportunity to talk to the youth of today, who may well be the workforce of tomorrow. Between the usual 'I want to be a footballer' and 'I want to be a YouTuber' conversations, there were many students considering trades and hands-on roles.*

*Hopefully, some walked away with a better understanding and interest in our sectors, thanks to the passionate speeches from the clients at Southern Renewals Enterprise, Volker Rail, and other partners who ran stands.*



**Thank you to the team for attending and helping inform the workforce of the future about potential careers!**



Tyler Cook, Principal Consultant; Tom Cleverley, Client Relationship Manager; and Dean Frost, Operations Manager



# Meet your HSEQ Team



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## **Gary Lobue - Head of HSEQ - 07827 962 485**

Oversees the HSEQ management of Ganymede's internal and external requirements including the safety, health and wellbeing of our internal staff and external workforce.

## **Suzanne Thorpe - HSE Manager - 07928 620 609**

Leads and project manages safety, health, and wellbeing initiatives, while coordinating environmental and social value sustainability efforts.

## **Chris Paddock - Safety and Competence Manager - 07773 208 421**

Oversees the competence of our safety critical workforce, analyses our health and safety performance including close calls and carries out site safety visits to engage with the workforce.

### **GANYMEDE CLOSE CALL SYSTEM**

**To report a close call please head to our Ganymede app.**



## **Have your say!**

If you want to give us any feedback on the Safety First newsletter, scan the QR code on the right or click [here](#). All feedback is recorded anonymously and reviewed regularly by our HSEQ and Marketing teams.