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East Coast Railway
(Engineering Department)

Office of the Chief Engineer
Annexe Building (East), C. S. Pur
Bhubaneswar – 751 023

CE's CIRCULAR No. 24

Sub : Ban on carrying of Thermit Welding Portions in the passenger trains and their storage and handling

A. GENERAL

3008 Dn Udyan Abba Toofan Express caught fire on 04.04.05 on DANAPUR Division of East Central Railway. As per provisional findings of CRS/Eastern Circle the fire incident was due to lighted ends of bidis/cigarettes thrown by passengers or by the sigri of tea vendors inadvertently which might have escalated due to thermit portions getting ignited by the ignition matches being carried in the coaches. As per instructions contained in Para 2.0 of Railway Board's letter No. TC-III/2077/04/1 dated 17.08.04, explosives, dangerous, inflammable articles, empty gas cylinders, dry grass and leaves, waste papers, acids, corrosive substances enumerated in Red Tariff must not be booked as luggage by passenger trains.

B. TRANSPORT

CRB vide letter no. 2005/Safety(A&R)/1/7 dated 28/07/05 has shown serious concern about such incidences and mentioned that thermit welding portions with ignition matches, which are prima facie said to have caught fire from a sigri/matchstick resulting in charring of 5 coaches cannot be considered non-inflammable articles. The fact that this material was carried in large quantity in train by the railway officials in passenger coaches near the vestibule portion, which is the most vulnerable to sparks of fire makes the lapse all the more serious. Practice of carrying thermit welding portions along with ignition matches has been reported after the accident which is a very serious matter which needs to be curbed immediately on all the Zonal Railways.

In view of the above, **the practice of carrying of thermit welding portions by passenger trains is totally banned.** This should be scrupulously adhered to and Thermit welding portions must not be carried in passenger carrying trains even for short leads from divisional/sub –divisional depots to work site. Proper arrangements of road transport should be done for the transportation of thermit portions.



C. STORAGE & HANDLING

Further, following precautions must be taken in storage & handling of Thermit welding portions.

- i. Store Thermit welding portions in well ventilated room free from leakage and with pucca cement concrete floor free of moisture. It required a layer of wooden planks at 15 cm above floor should be used for keeping the portions.
- ii. Do not store any inflammable/explosive materials in the room used for keeping portions.
- iii. Keep fire extinguishers/sand buckets ready out side the room for use in case of fire accidents.
- iv. Protect welding portions, crucibles and moulds against moisture and fire.
- v. Never let reacting portion or hot reaction products come into contact with water.
- vi. Never use water for fire extinguishing purposes. Use dry sand, if needed.
- vii. Store/transport igniters (ignition materials) separately from portions.

It must be ensured by all officials that the above instructions related to safe movement of passenger trains are adhered to without any exception. These instructions may be brought to knowledge of all supervisory staff like SSE/SE/JE (P.way) and also to field staff like PWM, Mates & Key men.


(J.S. Tolia) 28/11/05
o/c Chief Track Engineer

No. W-4/374/Pt.I/CE Circular/ 565

Date 28.11.2005

Copy to Sr DEN (Co)/KUR, SBP &WAT for information and circulation to all concerned.

All HODs, Dy HODs and Sr. Scale and Jr. Scale Officers of Engg. department at Head Quarters for information please.

Copy to Secretary to GM/E.Co. Railway for kind information to GM.