



**22 December 2008**

## **CHRISTMAS - A TESTING TIME FOR UNDERGROUND WORKERS**

Over 200 Tube Lines employees are heroically forgoing their usual Christmas festivities in order to test a new signalling system on the Jubilee line that will speed up passenger journeys.

The new signalling system is part of a £600 million investment in the Jubilee and Northern lines. When the Jubilee line work is completed in 2009, it will be the most significant improvement on the London Underground since 1999. Once accomplished, the line's 600,000 daily users will benefit from shorter waiting times for trains which means 25% more capacity – potentially space for an additional 5,000 passengers an hour – and an average journey time reduction of 22%. To put this into context, when the new signalling system comes into passenger use a typical journey between Wembley Park and Waterloo will take 28 minutes, compared to the current journey time of 31 minutes.

To help get the improved service safely working as quickly as possible, the whole Jubilee line will be closed from the end of services on Christmas Eve through to the start of traffic on Monday 29 December – giving workers 104 continuous working hours to carry out vital testing compared to the usual four hours at night.

Implementing a new signalling system is a vast undertaking but when you have to install it on an operational railway relied on by millions of passengers the task becomes even more challenging. Tens of thousands of kilometres of new cabling have already been laid, each train has had over 5,000 wires re-connected and 30 new signal equipment rooms have been built.

But the upgrade of the line is only part of the story; Tube Lines has to continue maintaining all 63 Jubilee line trains, all 27 stations and 76km of track to ensure passengers benefit from safe and reliable journeys each day. Because most of the work takes place during the few hours at night Tube Lines has to carry out this complex multi-million pound project in bite-sized chunks.

George Clark, Tube Lines Chief Engineering Manager says:

*“After looking at all the options with London Underground we jointly decided that the best time for a full closure is over Christmas as it causes the least disruption for commuters. It is vital that we fully test the new system to check that services can run smoothly and safely before passengers come on board. Unfortunately this can only take place during a closure of several days.*

*“We are sorry for the inconvenience caused, but the closures are necessary in order to deliver a faster and more efficient Jubilee line in the long-run.”*

The full closure allows time to switch from the existing system to the new Seltrac transmission based train control system, undertake testing and commissioning, and switch back again to the current system.

**ENDS**

**For further information, please contact:**

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### **Notes to Editors**

1. Tube Lines is installing the latest technology on the Jubilee line to speed up passenger journeys. This is the biggest signalling project on an operational railway currently taking place in the world. The new signalling system uses a train-based computer that connects with a special electrical induction loop between the rails and records each train's position with pinpoint accuracy. The system enables a train to report its location to a control centre to within centimetres. In response, the centre sends out messages telling trains how fast they need to go to maintain a safe distance from the train in front. It will mean that trains will no longer need to be spaced out according to fixed signalling blocks but can safely run closer together and move along the line much faster. As the system is automatic, trains will 'know' where they are on the network. They can pull into platforms at exactly the right spot without the drivers' assistance.
2. Tube Lines is responsible for the maintenance and upgrade of the infrastructure on the Jubilee, Northern and Piccadilly lines. London Underground is responsible for operating

the Underground, for employing drivers and station staff, for ticketing and fares, and for the Tube's safety regime.

3. The Tube Lines consortium consists of two shareholders – Amey and Bechtel. They bring together some of the most experienced providers of business services with specialist skills in the rail industry, including track and signal renewals, plus project and operational management. They are providing some of the best project and operational managers from around the world to work on the modernisation of the Tube system. Amey owns two-thirds of Tube Lines' business and Bechtel one third.

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