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Virgin Trains East Coast are one of the UK's leading train operators, responsible for some of the country's busiest rail routes. Providing a crucial link between London, Scotland, and the North East, the company runs 155 train services a day, carrying around 19 million passengers every year. It employs a team of over 3,250 staff based in a variety of roles at stations, depots and offices across Britain.

Many of these positions involve lone working at times, sometimes in remote areas. It's important for measures to be taken to protect employees, as there are a number of dangers they can encounter from aggressive fair evaders to drink-fuelled antisocial behavior.

The railway environment itself can also prove hazardous with fast moving trains and an increased risk of falls on slippery platforms during bad weather. To help manage the risks and fulfil their Duty of Care to employees, Virgin Trains chose Skyguard, issuing MySOS personal alarms to staff on the frontline so they can work alone with increased confidence. Following a successful trial period, the company was especially impressed with the devices' functionality, which allows a 'mandown' alert to be triggered after a sudden impact or fall, followed by a period of inactivity.

Staff working for Virgin Trains East Coast division use the MySOS as it is small, lightweight and can be worn and activated discreetly. Low-key alarm activation is a necessity, particularly if difficult circumstances arise such as altercations involving passengers.

Pressing the SOS button on the unit opens up a two-way audio connection between the user and Skyguard's Incident Management Centre (IMC).

This enables trained Controllers to listen in and provide assistance, involving the emergency services if required. Audio can also be recorded and used as evidence in court to prosecute individuals if an offence takes place.

Devices can be issued to individual users or pooled so they can be easily shared between teams. MySOS provides flexibility, allowing the service to be tailored to Virgin's needs. The device has GPS connectivity so it can be located, even in remote areas out on route. It will also work in places with low mobile coverage when fitted with a roaming SIM card.

One of the major advantages that Skyguard's Incident Management Centre offers Virgin Trains is that Controllers will already know who the user is and where they are, so they will be able to convey this to the emergency services immediately. Controllers can also pass on the main facts of the incident calmly and make them aware of any relevant information on medical conditions, as listed in the user's customer profile.

As Skyguard is approved by the Police's acclaimed 'Secured by Design' initiative and certified to BS 8484:2016 - the latest version of the British Standard for Lone Workers - this enables a faster emergency response than is available to the general public via the 999 system. If the emergency services are not required, MySOS also has two speed dial buttons which Virgin can set to call a supervisor or colleague for escalation purposes.

Providing adequate protection for rail staff is essential, especially for lone workers. Establishing appropriate procedures and methods by which employees can get help as quickly as possible is a must when working on trains and in stations.

Customer Solutions Manager, David Field at Virgin Trains East Coast speaks highly of the distinguished level of protection offered by Skyguard:

“The accessibility to services, functionality and rapid delivery timescale sets Skyguard apart from other lone worker protection providers. The mandown feature and SOS ability are the most impressive parts of the service. I would certainly recommend Skyguard.”



MySOS Features

- Small, lightweight device can be worn discretely and conveniently around the neck as a pendant, or attached to a keyring or belt.
- Mandown option automatically raises the alarm in the event of a fall or impact.
- Free Emergency alarm calls to our 24/7 manned Incident Management Centre.
- MTK GPS Chipset provides high degree of location accuracy.
- Call a phone number of your choice.
- Accredited to BS 8484:2016, the latest industry standard for lone working.
- Two-way audio functionality.
- Discreet vibrate function to indicate when an alarm has been initiated.



Skyguard Ltd is part of the Send For Help Group



To find out more or request a free trial, please call 0845 0360 999

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