

# Southeastern Rail

## Boosts depot security with smart access management system

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**As one of the UK's leading rail companies, Southeastern covers over 1,000 miles of railway infrastructure and carries around 570,000 passengers every weekday in the south east of England. The company serves commuter belt Britain, with 1,400 daily train journeys into London, and as such is under constant pressure to ensure passengers are reaching their destinations on-time and in comfort. This puts stress on Southeastern's 3,500-plus employees, whether they are customer-facing or one of the company's behind the scenes workers such as train engineers. There are in fact hundreds of employees working at rail depots to ensure trains are in top condition.**

To carry out this vital work, every depot contains many vehicles – from small vans to larger vehicles bearing heavy equipment. The depots also hold expensive machinery such as electrical drilling tools, in addition to chemicals which are classified as biohazards. To use certain equipment, each employee must have the right training and approval. This is to ensure the security of tools and vehicles and also the safety of staff. However, ensuring that only the right staff are able to access the right equipment has historically been a major challenge for the industry. To improve this, Southeastern decided to look at how to better manage access to its vehicles and tools.

Sam Cook, Shift Production Manager at Southeastern explains:

“Until recently, keys for our vehicles and tool storage units were kept in a basic key box. When staff took a key, they wrote it in the log book. This was not an ideal setup and relied heavily on and the diligence of employees. When under pressure, or in a rush to

get to a job, keys were sometimes taken without being logged or weren't returned on time. This compromised security and meant that, if equipment or a vehicle was needed by another member of staff, we wasted time searching for keys. It simply wasn't an effective way to secure equipment and ensure staff safety. So we began searching for an access management system that would rectify this.” Southeastern needed an access management system that would let it quickly assess whether an employee was qualified to handle specific equipment, and also ensure keys were monitored and returned on time. The ultimate goal was to improve security and safety, and to boost efficiency at the depot – with employees no longer having to search for lost keys or wait for them to be returned.

“When looking for a new access management solution, we came across Traka. When we spoke to the team there, we were impressed with the company's ability to design a system that perfectly matched our requirements. We needed to get something in place that would fit with the fast speed of life here at the depot. We are still heavily reliant on physical keys but manual processes were holding us back. Traka's key management system is a way of combining old and new by bringing in twenty-first century automation and accountability.”

The solution Traka developed is a bespoke access management system in which keys are permanently attached to an iFob. The iFobs contain an electronic chip, giving each a unique identity. Thus, the keys attached to each iFob are electronically tagged. With keys attached, each iFob locks into an automated key dispensing machine.



Alongside this is Traka's software through which Southeastern uploads user profiles for all staff. Linked to the key cabinet, each iFob is assigned a specific port within a Traka key cabinet and locked in place until released by an authorised user.

In addition, the system automatically records when a key is used and by whom on a central database. This information is available via the cabinet's data display or on an administrator's PC which means Southeastern can produce a report for each key showing when it has been used, by whom, and when it was returned. It can also alert management if a key is not returned.

#### Reaping the rewards of audited access management

Since implementing the system, Southeastern has seen numerous benefits. Firstly, control over keys has been significantly improved. Unauthorised personnel simply cannot access keys to equipment they are not meant to be using. As such managers no longer have to worry about untrained staff using powerful tools that could risk their safety.

In addition, key allocation is now far quicker, with staff no longer needing to manually sign out keys. Furthermore, keys are very rarely misplaced because if an employee takes a key, it must be returned within a set amount of time. If it is not returned, the employee is alerted to that fact, as is their manager. It has also encouraged more responsible use of vehicles and equipment by staff.

"It's all about accountability," explained Cook. "Members of staff know that when they take a key, the system logs that to their employee record – so if they lose it, we'll know. That encourages them to return keys on time and also to leave vehicles and tools in good condition. If a vehicle is damaged, we can look back at who last accessed the relevant key and speak to them about how the damage occurred."

Not only does this help us manage the depot and our equipment, but this kind of auditing is a major benefit when it comes to issues such as insurance. When you are managing so many vehicles and various electrical tools, insurance is a major part of life and Traka has helped us ensure we are meeting standards."

Implementation itself was completed in only a matter of hours, with a Traka engineer coming to Southeastern's depot to install the system and conduct staff training. This hands-on approach from Traka ensured that Southeastern staff immediately knew how to use the solution and could begin to reap the benefits of the access management system immediately.

Following the success of the access management system, Southeastern began to look at additional Traka technologies, including laptop lockers which enable staff to store and charge laptops securely in intelligent lockers. These are linked to Traka's software so a similar audit of who accessed laptops and when can be produced.

"The key management system has become as critical to everyday life in the depot as the tools it is helping us manage," added Cook. "It's quick and easy to use and most importantly, it has boosted security, improved staff safety, reduced wasted time and even benefitted wider processes such as insurance. We are now looking forward to getting the laptop lockers in place and will enjoy reaping similar rewards."



**southeastern**

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