

Command structure of Loco Running.

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In terms of Railway Board's advice, control of running staff is to be as under:

“The technical control of loco running staff will be under CME/CEE depending upon the type of the traction. The administrative control of all drivers will be under the COM at Zonal level. COM will be assisted by officers from Mechanical and Electrical Department”.

Arising out of the above COM has advised that 'administrative control' of all running staff will be under him and as such all administrative matters including DAR cases at zonal level will be dealt by him. The implication of the above is as below:-

- a. The distinction between 'technical control' and 'administrative control' needs clarification.
- b. Loco handling and train working is essentially a technical subject involving engineering related knowledge of control systems, trouble shooting and loco/train management. It is the technical skill of the driver which comes to play for working the train to destination. For the same reason, functions such as foot plate inspection, loco handling, trouble shooting etc. vests with the Sr.DME/Sr.DEE under the Headquarter control of CME/CEE.
- c. The word 'administrative control' as such has no place in the scheme of things, excepting for a distant interpretation involving cadre of drivers, filling up of vacancies, utilization, implementation of 10 hour rule, sanction of leave etc. Even observance of GR&SR has direct bearing to maneuverability and technical skill of the loco crew.
- d. Even transfer/selection/promotion etc is a technical subject involving assessing the drivers' knowledge and screening him for suitability to work mail/express and thereafter super fast trains.
- e. In matters of DAR, the appeal and review comes to Headquarters and involves technical knowledge and experience of various control and subsystems which could lead to failure/accident. It would therefore appear out of place for the appeal/review to be put up to a non technical functionary (by providing assistance from Mechanical or Electrical Headquarter officer – i.e. CME/O&F or CELE) as per Board's order.
- f. 'Administrative control' *inter alia* involves day-to-day control for efficient working such as leave sanction, training programme and other matters relating to establishment.

How COM from Headquarters can exercise administrative control on drivers is a point which requires close deliberation.

- g. It is also for investigation as to what all contribution COM makes towards well being, upliftment/improvement of running staff category to enable him exercise 'administrative control'. Even running rooms, crew booking lobbies etc are dealt by respective department – Electrical or Mechanical as the case be (excepting in stray cases where the running room/crew booking is under the control of station staff on account of its small size/numbers). Whenever the subject of improvement of running room, crew booking lobbies etc is raised invariably CME or CEE at Headquarters are held accountable.

Note : It would not be out of place to mention that during the Gaisal train accident on N.F.Railway few years back, the then CME on account of driver was held responsible amongst others for accident. Since the current Board's order is in no way departure from earlier practice, there is no reason why CME at Headquarters should have been held accountable for running staff failure leading to accident.

- h. Inspections done and notes issued thereon can be called for from zonal railways indicating the extent to which COMs are involved in improving the lot of drivers including their train working knowledge and skill.
- i. A presentation was made by Western Railway at the behest of the then Member Mechanical in the year 2002 which dealt with 'train dynamics and working' indicating that same is a technical function.
- j. Arising out of above, orders/practice periodic crew review is put up to AGM for sanction after routing it through COM although the entire scrutiny and assessment is made by respective Electrical/Mechanical officers in Headquarters. On E.C.Railway COM has now delegated this work to DRMs whereon the proposals will be initiated by DME(Power)/DEE(Operation) and **after approval by DOM will be put up to DRM for sanction.** Thus COM has delegated his power to Sr.DOMs for making crew review.

In view of the above it is suggested that the control of crew should be vested with CME/CEE as the case be in Headquarter who in addition to exercising the required technical control should also be overall incharge on all matters relating to running staff. If the subject requires further deliberation, the suggestion could be put on trial on one of the railways only for a period of six months or one year and a report obtained regarding its efficacy or otherwise.