



www.scottishaccessibletransport.org.uk

Scottish Charity: SC 027600

Secretary: Mike Harrison

PE1575/C

CONSIDERATION OF PETITION [PE1575](#)

It has not been possible to do a full consultation with the SATA membership on this petition, but I am myself a fairly frequent train user and have consulted with other members with both a visual impairment and other disabilities.

As a wheelchair user travelling in class 170 trains, I have to sit immediately adjacent to the toilet door. It is surprising how frequently sighted users of the toilet do not understand the door locking system or are unable to find the buttons and failed to lock the door – as you can imagine a source of embarrassment when someone else opens the door while they are inside. If sighted people frequently have difficulty, it must be more difficult for those who cannot see the buttons, and as one sighted person points out even if the buttons are marked in Braille it is very difficult to read the Braille without accidentally pushing the button and operating it!

To get a solution to this problem is going to be a very long process, partly because of the very long lifespan of rolling stock (30 years or more) and partly because there never has been any standardisation of **what** buttons are needed and **how** they should be laid out or **whereabouts** in the toilet compartment the control panel should be situated. Imagine the confusion if telephone keypads and calculators had all the numbers in a random order that just depended on the whim of the designer. This is the situation that we have with these toilets. I would suggest that we have to think on a wide scale for a solution which would begin by getting all the manufacturers of the equipment to agree on the number, function, and layout of the controls. There seems little point in one train operating company deciding on a standard layout within their fleet if another company decided on a different standard layout.

I think we should approach the operators in Scotland initially, then perhaps extended to those operating on a UK basis, and as there are several operators in the UK who are also European operators I think we should try to get some action on a European scale (although as some of our trains are Chinese, perhaps we should think really big and look for some worldwide standardisation).

What I think is important is that the control panel should cease to be simply a design feature, and that all manufacturers should recognise it as a functional feature.

I can't see the situation being righted in anything less than 30 years, but a start should be made and see no reason why Scotland should not be the initiator.