

Unipart Rail's electrifying service for Balfour Beatty

Following the successful implementation of remote warehouse supply chain management at the Ashford Signalling Stores for Balfour Beatty, Unipart Rail has now introduced a remote warehouse kitting service to support Balfour Beatty's electrification work. The success of the signalling stores - covering around 1,370 line items - led Balfour Beatty to ask Unipart Rail to develop a new service to deliver full kits of palletised materials to each of its possessions in a 'just-in-time format'.

Dave Gibbs, Customer Logistics Manager, Unipart Rail, said: 'This service meets Unipart Rail's core competence. Our position in the supply chain means that we can coordinate the materials precisely to the customer's requirements and iron-out any potential problems well in advance. With 'just-in-time', we have to achieve 100% on time delivery, every time.'

Working at least 12 weeks in advance of each weekend possession, Steve Edwards, Supply Change Management Manager, Unipart Rail, attends a Balfour Beatty weekly planning meeting where the schedule of materials is agreed. This enables Steve to identify any potential supply issues with key equipment and put resolutions in place before they become a problem.

Materials kitting

Working closely with Unipart Rail's inventory management team, the materials for the possessions are palletised in precisely the right way for the installation engineers to direct the pallets to the right part of the possession and, with everything being supplied for each element of the work palletised together, the work of installation can progress smoothly and quickly.

Mike Vaz, Territory Electrification Manager, Balfour Beatty, said: 'This new service has been running since June and has enabled us to move from multi-supplier, multi-requisition and multi-deliveries to a single relationship and a single delivery each week. It has streamlined the materials supply process considerably. As the pallets are transferred directly into our own vehicle at our depot, there is no need for unpacking and storage, and eliminates potential errors which might occur through double-handling.'

Paul Martin, ETE Manager, Balfour Beatty, observed: 'We previously had supervisors identifying and picking materials from our stocks for each piece of work - now they can concentrate on the project itself, confident that the materials will arrive precisely to meet their needs. We have also been able to significantly reduce our materials inventory. There was some nervousness at handing the complete



Palletised materials get their final check before dispatch.

materials supply to Unipart Rail, but their response so far has been positive and we are now seeing the benefits.'

Unipart Rail's service covers:

- Careful in-advance planning.
- Supplier management.
- Palletising and labelling to customer's requirements.
- 'Just-in-time' delivery.
- 100% on-time delivery.



More new product introductions for the rail infrastructure

Bringing new innovations into the market is key to ensuring the railway system is as safe and efficient as possible. Unipart Rail's Product Innovation Department specifically targets products that will meet Network Rail's key Control Period 4 targets for bringing costs down and improving performance. Detailed here are two of these new products, along with links to their product bulletin datasheets.

OHLE height and stagger gauge

The new height and stagger gauge for UK track gauge (pictured below) is fabricated from lightweight aluminium making it easily transportable as well as being robust enough to withstand trackside use.

<http://www.unipartrail.com/WebPDF/ProductBulletins/363.pdf>



Polymer cable trough

Less than a quarter of the weight of the concrete equivalent, this new range of troughing is designed to connect seamlessly with existing concrete troughs (pictured below).

<http://www.unipartail.com/WebPDF/ProductBulletins/354.pdf>

