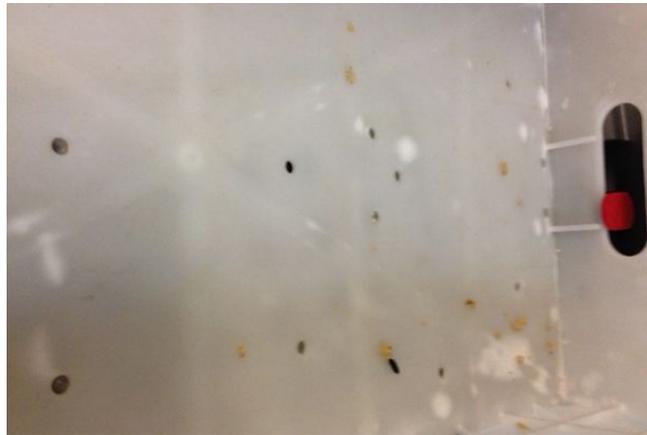


**Mirror**

# Virgin Trains kitchen pictured 'covered in rodent droppings' as rail union slams 'major hygiene issue'

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A Virgin Trains kitchen has been pictured seemingly covered in 'rodent droppings' as a union raised fears of a 'major hygiene issue' on a popular passenger route.

Images released by the RMT group claimed there was "clear evidence" of a health and safety issue on the East Coast line, which runs through the North East between Scotland and London.

The RMT said the photographs "emerged clearly showing droppings in the food preparation and kitchen area" on board one of the trains.

Virgin Trains said it was one-off incident, which it believes was caused by a supplier.

The pictures marked the latest clash in a series between rail bosses and unions.



The RMT says it has written to the company both demanding action and warning of the risks to passengers and staff on Virgin's East Coast trains.

It linked it to the announcement yesterday that the major partner, Stagecoach, had an 8% increase in profits, Chronicle Live reports.

Meanwhile the RMT is soon to begin balloting members for industrial action over what it sees as the company attempts to “hammer staff with an imposed pay increase and associated attacks on working conditions”.



RMT General Secretary Mick Cash said: “It is frankly appalling that VTEC, an alliance of Stagecoach and Virgin, have allowed this rodent scandal to fester on their trains.

“This franchise is out of control.

"Only last week VTEC were given what amounts to a tax-payer funded bail-out of £2 billion by the Government while at the same time they have forced a major dispute with RMT through their sneering attitude to their staff over pay and conditions.

“RMT is demanding urgent action over the rodent infestation and an absolute assurance that staff forced to work in these shocking conditions will not be denied the duty of care that VTEC owe them.”

A spokesperson for Virgin Trains on the east coast route said: “This was an isolated incident which we believe was caused by a supplier.

"As soon as we became aware of this, we quickly acted to isolate the affected areas.

"These areas were then thoroughly cleaned before being put back into use.”