

Lötschberg Base Tunnel - ready for anything : Roger Phelps' photo tour of the BLS Emergency

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LÖTSCHBERG BASE TUNNEL – READY FOR ANYTHING

Roger Phelps' photo tour of the BLS Emergency

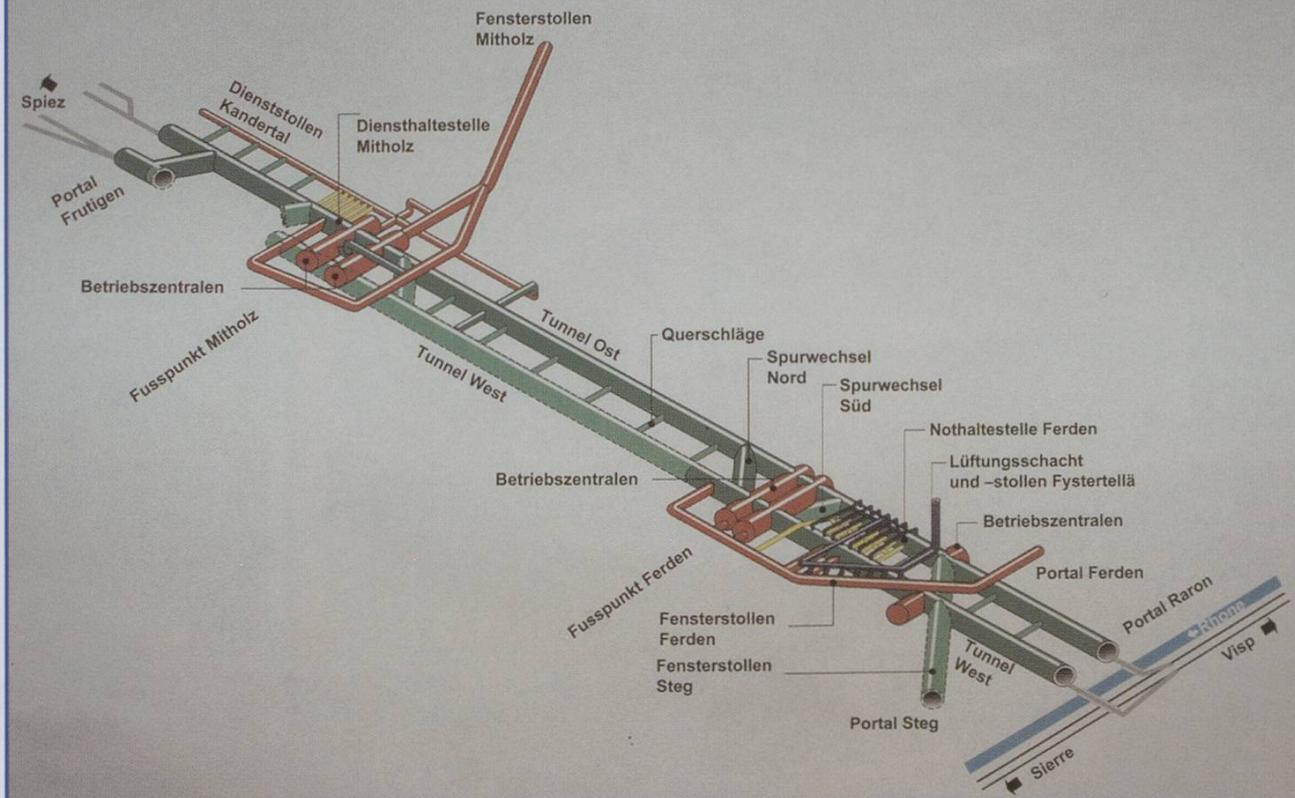
The Tunnel Rescue train stands in Spiez Station waiting for the Institute of Railway Signal Engineers to join it and be transported into the yard for a detailed view and explanation of the Rescue train. This is the north end of the train and the leading two vehicles are for evacuation. The trailing vehicles are the business end for fire fighting and rescue.

PHOTOS: Roger Phelps.

In September 2006 SRS Member Roger Phelps was privileged to have a tour at Spiez of one of the special trains that the BLS has put into service to be ready to cope with any emergency that may occur in the new Lötschberg Base Tunnel. Roger, a railway signal engineer, was a member of a study tour organised by his professional body.

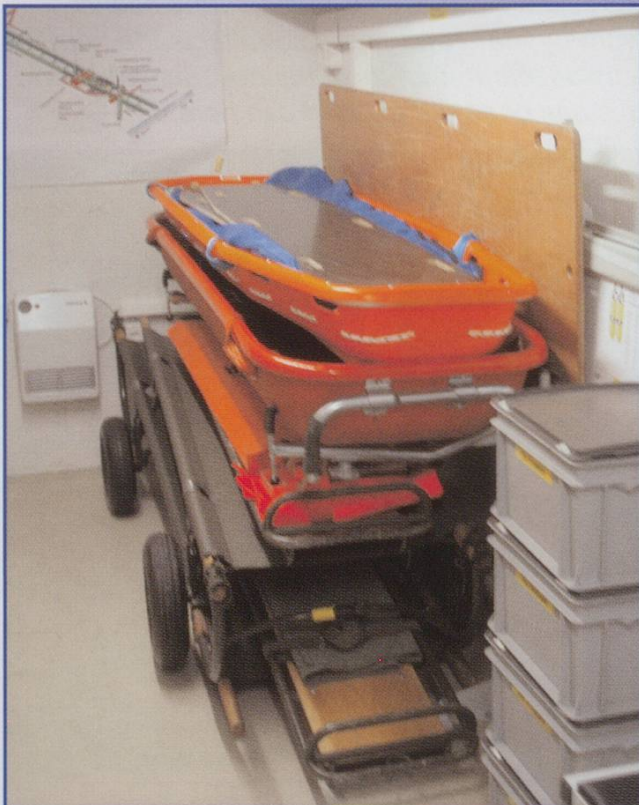
Inside one of the two training vehicles which are used to ferry rescuers into the incident and casualties out to safety. Depending where the incident is, the train may be used to ferry casualties out, they may be transferred to road vehicles for onward evacuation.



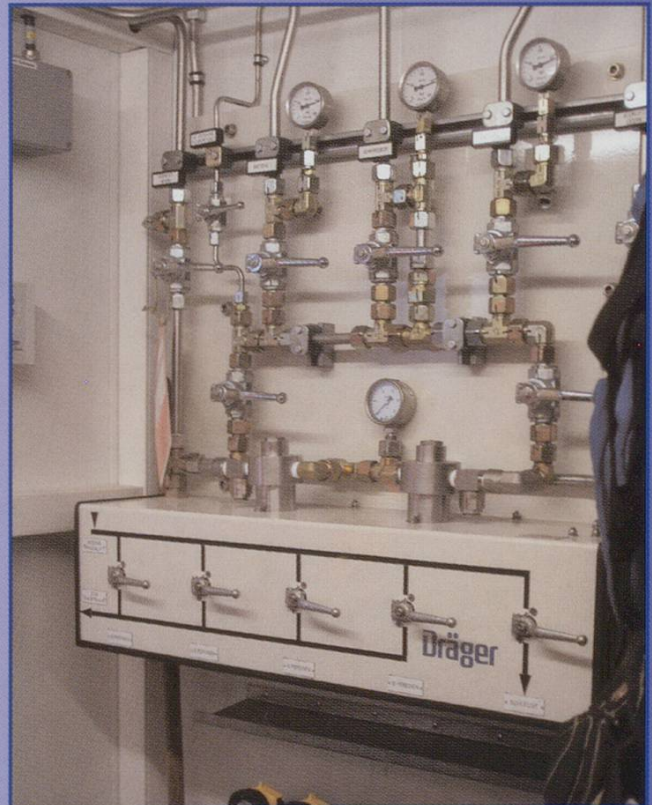


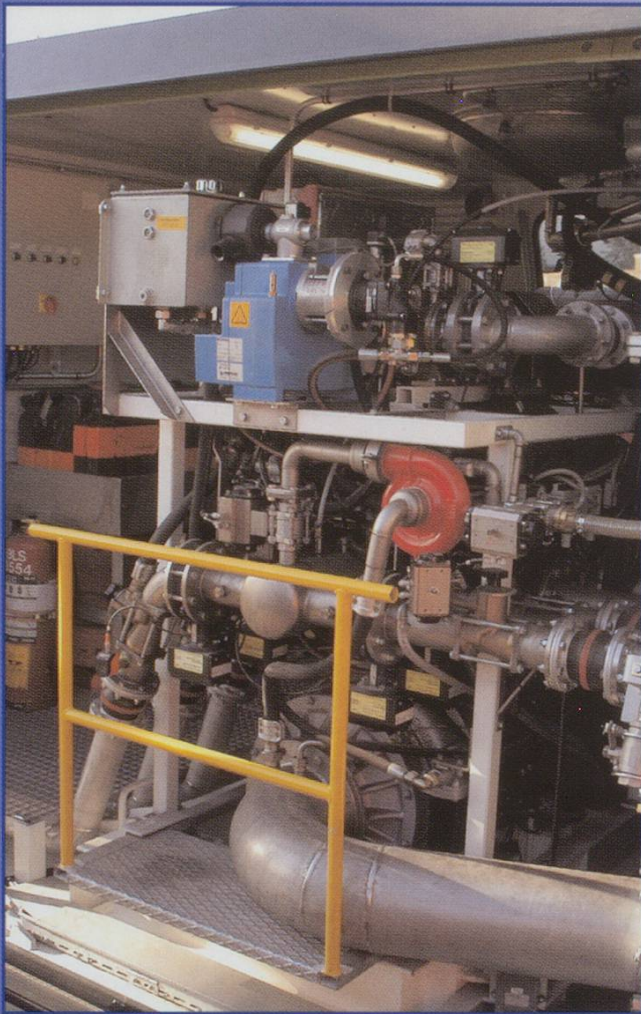
The map shows the set-up in the tunnel. The west tunnel does not have any track and can be used by road vehicles to help in the evacuation. Road vehicles can access the tunnel at Frutigen, Mitholz, Ferden and Raron. In the event of an emergency, rescue trains will be dispatched from both ends of the tunnel to the incident. Trains are stopped without human intervention and drivers of these trains reverse out of the tunnel without the need to change ends and under full signalling at a reduced speed of 80kph.

Stretchers in one of the rescue vehicles; note the fold down beds behind.

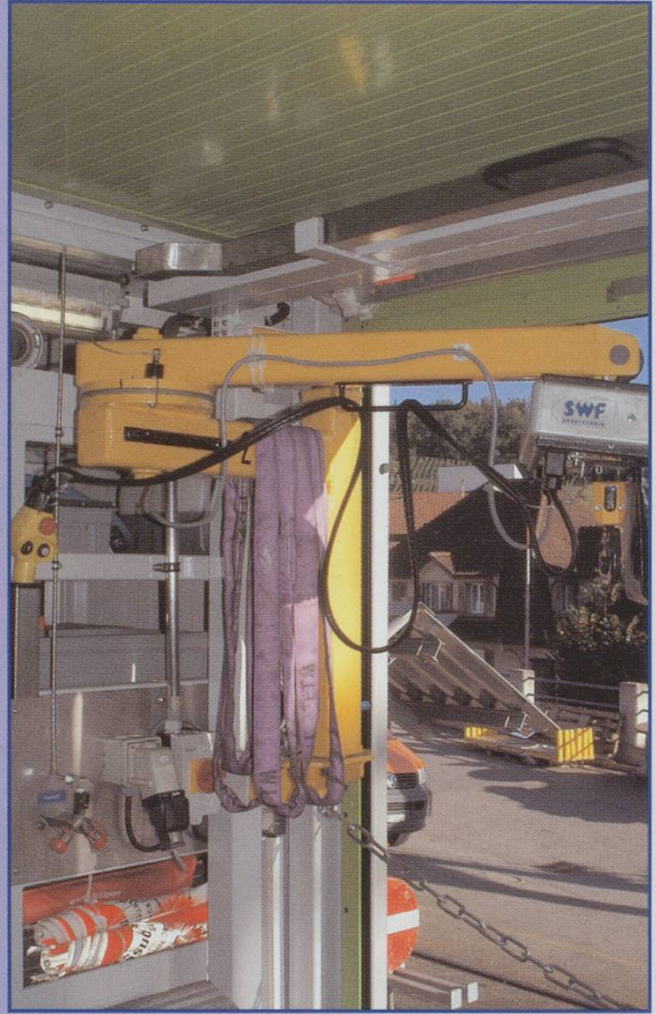


Compressed air controls for air within the train and to recharge air bottles for the rescuers.





BOTTOM LEFT: *The front of the business end; the white box on top is a foam sprayer – the train carries 1600 litres of foam and 52,000 litres of water. The most successful way to extinguish a fire is to spray the water in a fine mist; apparently the effect is quite dramatic. The control in the leading cab is designed to withstand extreme temperatures and air is supplied from the pumps.*



TOP LEFT: *Part of the water and foam pumps in the business end.*

TOP RIGHT: *Lifting hoist to raise and lower heavy equipment in and out of the train.*

BOTTOM RIGHT: *One of the safety helmet worn by the crews; the gold reflects the heat. A lot was learnt from the Channel Tunnel fire and this has been put to good use here.*

