

Transportation Safety bulletin



A 'High Potential' Close Call has taken place

Train signalled into a Line Block at line speed

Issued to: All Atkins staff, Network Rail IP Signalling Head of Safety, ISLG and RIAG

Ref: ATB 01/16

Date of Issue: 28th January 2016

Location: Gailey (Wolverhampton project).

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Overview

On the 20th January 2016, a signaller granted a line blockage to a work team, COSS and two operatives, working in the vicinity of Gailey ETE Cabin carrying out installation of EAK hard standing. This was the 3rd line blockage, with the two previous Line Blockages, for delivering material to site and excavations respectively, being completed successfully.

During the 3rd line blockage, the COSS and an operative were returning to the access point to collect tools when a freight train came through the work site. Fortunately, no operatives or equipment were on track or within the four foot.

The COSS rang the Signaller to report the incident. The Signaller checked everyone was ok and immediately reported the incident. He was stood down from his duties.

Discussion Points:

While Network Rail are investigating the causes of this 'high potential' close call, please discuss the following with your teams:

- Clear communication between the Signaller/ COSS and during other telephone conversations is critical. The Signaller failed to establish correctly the location that the COSS was working from. Do you challenge the Signaller if unclear? Do you relay back information to ensure everyone is clear and with no potential for error?
- Are there any alternates to working within line blockages? Is a Possession available for the works, especially during the hours of darkness?
- Have you risk assessed, or considered if there is a need for additional protection?
- How do you encourage your team not to become complacent and to be continuously alert to their surroundings?
- How do you ensure that the work force are constantly aware that the railway is a dangerous place to work?
- Are your teams reporting into NSC or their own site access system so that it is clear where you are on the infrastructure, in the case of an emergency or any incident?
- Do you ever undertake a Safety Communication check with your team to ensure they are following the correct procedure?

A level 1 investigation concluded that the Signaller thought he was communicating with a different COSS in another location, this resulted in a Line Blockage for the wrong area being granted. The report identifies poor safety critical communication between the Signaller and the COSS.

An accident was only prevented by staff not being on track, within the four foot at the time the train passed through the line blockage. There was potential for multiple fatalities if the train had passed through the line blockage at line speed and hit the work group.

Atkins Transportation is reviewing the policy on Line Blockages and the application of additional protection.