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The Southern Region's Weekly Safety Update

11 January 2017

Working adjacent to an open line

An Any Line Open (ALO) plan had been prepared at a worksite at Tovil to use plant adjacent to an open line. However, it was identified that some of the control measures were not appropriate given the changing nature of the site. For example, the earth berm was used as a control measure but was in the process of being removed.

In addition, some of the controls were not being applied, such as the excavator being left with its tracks parallel to the open line. The incident is under investigation.

Remember...



Always be sure the required plans and permits are in place, before you start a job or go on or near the line.



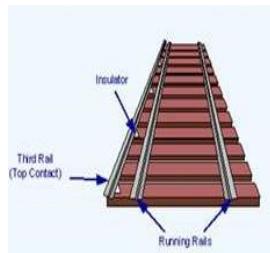
You can find more information on [ALO working on Safety Central](#).

Risk of residual track current

An operative at Stewarts Lane Depot received a small electric shock whilst putting a track trolley onto the running rails. Fortunately, the operative did not sustain any injuries. The incident is under investigation; however, it is believed to be a residual track current.

Did you know?

The running rails on the DC electrified area in the South of England do not get disconnected from the system during possessions or isolations. Traction return currents can still be present in the running rails, producing a small voltage on the rails.



The small voltage on the running rails will also be present on the isolated conductor rails as a result of the use of shorting straps during possessions and isolations. This voltage will usually be around 50volts and is enough to startle somebody and potentially cause an accident. **[Further details on the risks and mitigations of DC Traction Return Systems can be found here.](#)**



Click on the shield above to access our website

Close Calls

During works at Mortimer station the platform surface was being lowered, requiring excavation around a lamp column. It was found that this work was being undertaken whilst the cable feeding the column was still live. Works were suspended whilst the cable was isolated. An investigation is underway. This appears to be a similar incident to one that occurred at Egham where a cable and duct were damaged.



At Waterloo south sidings, access gates to shared public and railway areas were left unlocked. This could have allowed trespassers to enter, although they would not have been able to enter the track as the track access gate was locked. The incident has been reported as a Close Call and it has been requested that the gate is manned or locked to prevent access to trespassers.

[You can find a toolbox talk on site security here.](#)

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Driving of metal pins

It was recently identified on a site in the South East that authority had been given for a netlon fence to be erected using driven metal pins. The risk of striking a buried service in the cess is high, even with buried services records available and the use of cable scanning equipment.

The erection of netlon fencing using metal pins is unjustifiable as there are many safer alternative fencing options, such as Vortex and free standing posts cast in buckets.

Remember...

The driving of metal pins (or spikes) into the ground on railway infrastructure has an inherently high risk of striking a buried service. This presents a health and safety risk to staff, as well as the potential to impact the operational railway.



The driving of metal pins is covered in Network Rail standard 'Working safely in the vicinity of buried services' (NR/L2/INI/CP1030) and section 9.9 states '**they shall only be used as a last resort**'.

Appendix D of the standard also requires that:

Before a metal driven pin or spike is installed, the person in charge of the work shall obtain permission from a Senior Manager within Network Rail. The Senior Manager shall give written permission for this activity for each and every location.

This permission shall be granted only when all alternative methods, other than spiking, are proven to be unworkable and the requirements of the following sections have been met:

- 6.1.1 - search existing records
- 6.2 - Safe System of Work
- Clause 7 - site survey

The Senior Manager shall maintain a record of each and every event where permission to use metal driven pins or spikes has been granted on a "Permit to Spike" form (Appendix J), or on an equivalent form that captures the information shown on it. The record shall show the reason for giving permission.

Southern Shield PPE poster



The Southern Shield PPE poster has been updated and now includes further detail on how to check that your gloves are of Cut 5 standard, as well as the minimum standard required for mid-sole protection on boots.

You can find a copy of the poster on the [Southern Shield website](#). **Please print this poster and put it up in welfare units, offices and other suitable locations.**

Safety Bulletins

In the last week, we have issued a Safety Flash on an OLE failure and a Safety Update on the updated PPE poster. Don't forget, you can access all of our safety bulletins and more on the [Southern Shield website](#).

Network Rail fined £800,000 after worker is hit by train

Network Rail has been fined £800,000 in a prosecution brought by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) following a serious incident on the railway two and a half years ago.

In June 2014, a track worker sustained multiple serious and life-changing injuries while performing rail maintenance work near Redhill in Surrey. ORR inspectors concluded that the work on the main line between Brighton and London was inadequately planned and managed, placing track maintenance workers in unnecessary danger.

The Court heard that works were scheduled whilst fast, frequent trains continued to run, in an area with a narrow and steep embankment where the ability of track workers to retreat to a 'position of safety' when trains approached was materially compromised. The Court also heard that the works could have been carried out at night, when other scheduled works would have ensured that no trains were running.

In the Southern Region, we mandate the use of the [Track Access Protocol](#). **You can also read the full article here.**

If you would like a colleague to receive Home Safe, please contact
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