



Infrastructure Projects Southern

Home Safe

The Southern Region's Weekly Safety Update

12 April 2017

A slip, a trip and a bang



An operative on the way to carry out strapping duties, slipped on the ballast in the 4-foot. As a result, a DC Short Circuit Strap came into contact with the Live Conductor Rail. An investigation is underway but this incident reminds us of the risks that are imported by carrying equipment near to the live conductor rail.

A mandatory protocol is being introduced – in the IP Southern region we will shortly be implementing a Live Conductor Rail protocol. This will require authorisation in advance of any planned work which involves walking or accessing within 1.0m of the Live Conductor Rail. This follows two serious safety incidents in the southern region when two operatives suffered burns as a result of equipment coming into contact with the 750v live conductor rail.

Test before touch or a 200 volt shock?

Technicians were sent to a site to investigate an Intelligent Infrastructure alarm. The alarm was on a piece of equipment known as a Bender Earth Monitoring system which is typically found in signalling and plant equipment rooms and other trackside locations.

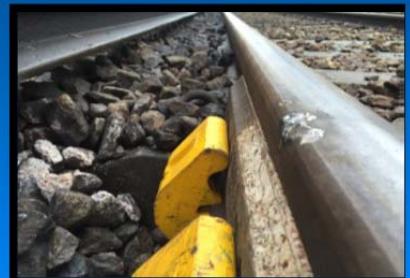
On carrying out a "test before touch" lifesaving rule the cabinet was found to be live with 200 volts (shown right). Rubber gauntlets were used to access the location. A short circuit fault was observed in the 650 volt chamber located in the bottom of the signalling location cabinet. This was isolated to allow a repair to be carried out.



The Third Rail is dangerous – some previous incidents



There was an Operational Close Call at Berrylands when an uninsulated bar came into contact with a live conductor rail.



An insulated fork came into contact with a running rail and the live 750v DC conductor rail. As a result of the electrical flash-over, a Network Rail apprentice sustained a minor arc eye injury.



Do you always test before touch? It's a Lifesaving Rule for a reason!

Contact us: shield@networkrail.co.uk

Poor practice challenged



A construction manager stopped an operative working on site after seeing him using a circular saw, which had a piece of cloth jammed into the dust extraction port. This cloth could have jammed the saw; making the saw jump and potentially injuring the operative.

The operative was reminded that under health and safety legislation he is forbidden from altering or tampering with anything provided for safety purposes. The construction manager also requested the supervisor supply the correct dust extraction units for the saw to prevent this situation arising in the first place.

Are the safety devices on your equipment fit for purpose and being used correctly?

Did you know about using ladders?

The use of step ladders is often raised as a question as their use can be seen as being against the Lifesaving rules. Ladders are not banned but our lifesaving Rule states “always use a safety harness when working at height, unless other protection is in place”.

While a safety harness may not always be practical there are ways you can provide protection when using a ladder. The simplest is to use a step ladder that has hand rails and an extended rail above the top step as shown in the three examples above. However, there is a better solution and that is to use a mini-podium as shown left.



Remember: Appendix B of the Southern Shield Charter has a matrix which provides a series of options that should be worked through when assessing safe systems for working at height.

Live services and digging...some best practice

Throughout 2016, the London Bridge team had a number of events which highlighted that there were issues with digging around live services.



Therefore, they set up an excavation workshop to review the events and key findings from investigations. As a result of the workshop, a number of improvements were identified including:

- Having one single authorised person appointed – effectively a project controlling mind for excavations.
- Implementation and maintenance of a site based Digging Control Room, to brief the excavation teams.
- Dedicated resource responsible for carrying out all project excavation works.
- Review of permits at a Weekly Permit Clinic and on site surveillance carried out by the Network Rail Utilities Construction Manager as an independent check.

You can find the complete [Thameslink best practice bulletin here](#).