

Transferable Lessons from Serious Operational Incidents / Investigations



Issue No: NR/OPS/064

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Line Blockage Irregularity within the Thameslink Core



Summary of Incident:

On 9th August, multiple Thameslink units failed on the A/C network due to a power surge. At approximately 23:09, Siemens Fitters contacted the Signaller on Core South Workstation at Three Bridges ROC and stated that they needed to walk the line between City Thameslink and Blackfriars. The caller asked the Signaller if there was a block on the Southbound line. The signaller stated that there was no block in place but there were no trains running due to the failure. The caller asked the Signaller if it was safe to walk the line to which the signaller responded, "you can walk from Blackfriars to City Thameslink on whichever line you like". A safe system of work was not formally arranged neither was a clear understanding reached as to the exact requirements of the staff involved.

Learning points:

- Rulebook Module TS1 section 13 states the scenarios and personnel who can request a Line to be blocked.
- The signaller must establish the role of the personnel requesting access to the track
 - Fitters may be asked to access the track to walk to a failure however they must not do this until a DP, COSS or SWL has been appointed who will take charge of the safety arrangements.
- If an individual does not know the exact location of the train then the Rulebook dictates that all lines must be blocked.
- Prior to allowing personnel to go on track a clear understanding must be established.
- The signaller must complete NR3180 to ensure that protection is fully provided.

Points to consider and further actions and precautions:

- If someone asks to walk to a stranded train, do you know what role they are undertaking?
- During disruptive events, there can be numerous parties on site that you would not otherwise deal with.
- Which Non-Technical Skills are important if a major incident has occurred and all trains are at a stand?
- The Rulebook must still be applied rigorously to ensure the safety of all staff.

Briefed out to:

All Signalling Staff and Frontline Operations Teams.