

IMDM INNER

Operational Close Call on the Down Main Slow (BML1), Woking Junction

Incident

At approx. 01:56 on 24th January 2020 a COSS from Woking S&T, working on 2234pts on the Down Slow line (BML1) at Woking Jn, in what he believed was a line blockage (LB), observed a train approaching on the road his team were working on. The train sounded its horn, the team moved to a position of safety and the COSS reported the incident.

The COSS was working under a Protection Controller (PC) who was also undertaking Engineering Supervisor (ES) duties for a three-line possession (T3) adjacent to the one under the LB. The ES/PC was in the process of issuing CRP permits to the COSS's wanting to enter the worksite when he inadvertently phoned the S&T COSS, telling him to proceed when the LB had yet to be taken.

At no point did the ES/PC clarify whether he was referring to the T3 or the LB. The S&T COSS also failed to confirm which line the ES/PC was referring to, so no clear understanding was reached between the two parties.

The ES/PC had not performed the PC or ES duties for some time due to long term absence, prior to the incident. He was issuing permission to start work in the worksite to teams over the phone and not face to face.

Discussion Points:

This event is still under investigation but in the meantime please discuss with your teams:

- Should one individual be carrying out **both ES and PC duties** when the work being undertaken under the respective protection arrangements were separate from each other?
- The ES/PC did not use the correct communication protocol, and this was not **challenged** by the COSS.
- How can we assure ourselves that if a person has been away from work for a significant period, they are fit and ready to return to safety critical duties?
- Is it acceptable to issue permits to work over the phone? If so, how should this be coordinated? How do teams organise their paperwork to avoid any confusion?

