

# Safety Bulletin

A serious accident has happened



**Issued to:** All NR Operations staff and contractors.

**Reference:** WX 02/20

**Date of Issue:** 26/05/2020

**Location:** Wessex Route, Honiton-156m16ch Honiton, Devon

**Contact:** Ben Wilkinson - Route Asset Manager (Buildings and Structures)



## Overview

On Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020, a structures examiner working for a contractor on behalf of the RAM (Buildings and Structures), was undertaking a planned detailed examination of Hodge's underline bridge on the BAE2 near Honiton. The examiner was working under the individual working alone arrangements of his employer. The infrastructure is a single line situated on a 6m high embankment with heavily vegetated side slopes.

The examiner gained access to the site of work by walking along a wide, up side cess and reported his arrival to his employer. He subsequently crossed Hodge's Bridge on the same side and looked for a suitable means of access down the embankment to examine structural elements from ground level.

At 0657 hrs he identified a small area clear of vegetation at the top of the embankment and approached to assess its suitability as a route down the slope. It was whilst assessing this route he slipped/tripped near the top of the embankment and fell. This resulted in him sliding feet first down the slope and over a 2m vertical drop at the bottom into a ditch, landing on his feet. The drop was formed of soil and tree roots overlaying an unprotected 800mm diameter culvert not visible when viewed from above. As a result of the fall he sustained compound fractures to the tibia and fibula of his left leg.

He was able to call for help by activating the emergency button on a lone worker app. Following a short search to locate him, he was attended by an air ambulance crew before relocation by road to hospital where emergency surgery was performed. The injured party is recovering at home.

## Discussion Points and Lessons Learnt

*While the incident is being investigated, please discuss with your teams:*

- *What steps would you take to assess the hazards and risks associated with descending a slope on foot?*
- *What are the processes for reporting lineside hazards with the potential to cause workforce injury?*
- *How would you raise the alarm when working alone? How useful could an emergency 'lone worker app' be in your role?*

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