

The importance of safe lifting operations



Hello everyone,

My safety message this week is about safe lifting operations, which are vital to keeping our infrastructure running. This is critical to delivering two of our three priorities in Wales and Western – *running trains on time*, and *everyone home safe every day*.

The lifts we do range from large, heavy, and uneven objects – like bespoke precast concrete and metal structures – to standard equipment and material, such as bags of ballast. All lifting operations must be planned by a competent person, appropriately supervised, and carried out safely.



Rob Cairns,
Regional Managing Director

It is important that the lift plan corresponds directly to the operation and all hazards have been identified. The lift plan will provide calculations and methodology to ensure the safe working load is not exceeded. Any changes to a lift plan on site can only be made by a competent lift planner or appointed person.

I suspect some of you will be aware of an incident in April last year, where a 25t excavator being used to move material tipped over at Nuneham. Fortunately, no-one was injured – but all the ingredients were there for this to have had much more serious consequences. The investigation found there had been no lift plan, some of those involved didn't have the right competencies, and that the excavator shouldn't have been used for lifting in the first place. All basic things that we should, and must, get right. If you're ever unsure about safe lifting operations, please [contact](#) our Wales and Western mobile plant lead.

One of my bits of learning over the years has been to note how fastidious and comprehensively the majority of our site works are planned and executed. Lest we forget, no organisation could perform the many thousands of incident-free operations each week, in the way we consistently do, without that being a very safe organisation and with its safety priorities being embedded in everything we do. In all of that, I do observe a distinction between how well the site works are planned in contrast to a number of supporting tasks, which happen away from the railway and don't always enjoy the same planning and focus rigour. Material and equipment deliveries from third party suppliers are examples of instances where we face significant hazards and safety risk, but sometimes the planning can be inconsistent. In this regard, it's about thinking of the 'end to end' system implications of what we do, and how we plan.

In Wales and Western, we are aiming for world class safety. When it comes to getting everyone home safe every day, nothing less will do. So, alongside learning from incidents like this, I want everyone to consider three qualities that need to become central to our culture. And that means they are everyone's responsibility:

- **Zero tolerance to poor safety behaviours** (we own this together)
- **Recognising positive safety leadership** (call out things people do well, as well as challenging those that don't)
- **Being personally accountable** (behaviours, processes and work environment are ours to own)

I'm really interested to know how you are making these happen in your team – please do reply to this email and let me know.

Thank you and stay safe

Rob

Did you find this message helpful?



Great



Okay



Poor

This update is provided by the Wales and Western Communications team. For any queries, please contact walesandwesterncomms@networkrail.co.uk



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