

Safety Bulletin

A serious incident has taken place

Train and tractor collision

Issued to: All Network Rail line managers and RISQS registered contractors

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Location: Hockham Road UWC, Anglia Route

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Overview

On Sunday 10 April 2016, the 12:04 Norwich to Cambridge service collided with a tractor at Hockham Road user worked level crossing near Thetford in Norfolk.

The train sustained significant damage especially to the driving cab, but did not derail. The tractor driver was airlifted to hospital after being ejected from the tractor and suffering multiple fractures. The train driver had cuts to his hand but escaped more serious injury by leaving his driving position before the impact. Four of the 135 passengers on board the train suffered minor injuries as the farm machinery subsequently collided with the side of the 3-car train.

Hockham Road is a 'hybrid' level crossing, combining a user worked crossing (for authorised vehicles) and a public footpath right of way. The line speed at the location is 90mph.

Discussion Points

Whilst we are investigating the causes of this incident please discuss the following with your teams:

- What more could be done to limit the risk of errors at crossings where users are required to ask signallers' authority to cross?
- How can we most effectively involve staff and Trades Unions in improving our risk management?

The method of working currently in use at the crossing requires a vehicle user to telephone the signaller to gain permission to cross. The tractor driver did call and was authorised to cross.

An overlay Miniature Stop Light system previously operating at the crossing was temporarily decommissioned in October 2015. Network Rail is working with the supplier to address design concerns by August 2016.

The incident is under investigation by British Transport Police, the Rail Accident Investigation Branch and the Office of Rail and Road in addition to the industry formal investigation.

The investigations will include consideration of the design of the crossing, changes to its method of working and the interface with the signaller in Cambridge signalling centre.

- How can you maintain high quality safety critical communications in your business area?
- What ideas do you have to identify new ways to keep ourselves, colleagues, passengers and the public who interface with level crossings safe?

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