

Safety Bulletin

A serious incident has taken place



On-Track Machine Runaway at Taunton Operating Base (OB)

Issued to: **Network Rail line managers, safety professionals and RISQS registered contractors**

Ref: NRB19-13

Date of issue: 20/09/2019

Location: Taunton

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Overview

On Thursday 29 August, a Network Rail On-Track-Machine (OTM) ran away from a connecting locomotive at Taunton Operating Base (OB), following a routine maintenance event.

In preparation for a shunting movement, a member of staff checked that the handbrake was applied and removed the scotches holding the OTM stationary for maintenance. As a locomotive buffered up to the OTM, the OTM began to run away. Fortunately, the OTM was stopped when a member of staff intervened by placing a scotch under a wheel of the OTM which prevented the OTM running away down the yard. No one was harmed.

Early indications show that the handbrake had been applied prior to the locomotive buffering up to the OTM. However, shunting staff were unaware that a defective brake cable had left the handbrake incapable of holding the OTM stationary.

A level 2 investigation has commenced into the circumstances around this serious incident, further safety advice will be issued should the investigation identify risks that require action by Network Rail staff or contractors.

Discussion Points

Whilst we investigate the incident please discuss the following with your team:

- The safe systems of work for train maintenance and shunting activities that are designed to prevent unintended vehicle movements in sidings and depots. Are they adequate and are they applied correctly?
- The importance of adequate planned preventative maintenance and maintenance instruction to identify and repair rail vehicle defects.
- The management of vehicles with brake defects in sidings and depots. How and when should the brakes be checked? If the defect can not be rectified immediately how is this hazard made clear to other staff who may subsequently rely on the brakes to hold the vehicle in a stationary position?