

# Safety Bulletin

A serious incident has taken place



## Fire involving Network Rail laptop

Issued to: **All Network Rail line managers, safety professionals and accredited contractors**

Ref: NRB21-05

Date of issue: 22/06/2021

Location: Employees' private house

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## Overview

On 7th June 2021 at around 03:00am a Network Rail colleague woke to find a fire had broken out in the living room of their house. The Network Rail colleague was asleep in the room where the fire broke out and contained it before the fire brigade arrived. The family escaped the house with no injuries.

The exact cause of the fire remains under investigation by the fire service. However, the fire involved a Network Rail laptop and charger. The laptop was closed, plugged into a domestic mains socket, and had been left to charge on a carpet floor, and near to or under a curtain.

The manufacturer of the laptop and charger have confirmed that they have had no other reports of fire. There is visible damage to the laptop charging cable, but it is not clear whether this was caused by hot curtain debris falling onto it, or if it was the cause of the fire.

An internal investigation will be led by Technical Authority. Another Safety Bulletin will be issued if any further learning is identified.

## Discussion Points

- How often do you check power supply cables to look for signs of damage or heating?
- Is electrical equipment safely connected while charging or in use? Could an extension lead be overloaded?
- Are your devices always used and charged on an appropriate hard, flat surface with adequate airflow (i.e. with the fan or exhaust ports not being obstructed)?
- Have you got adequate ventilation around your electrical equipment?
- If electrical equipment has been dropped or damaged, what would you do to report that and get it checked to be certain it remains safe?
- If devices are not being used for a long period of time (e.g. multiple days), do you switch them off and disconnect the power supply?
- How often do you check the smoke alarms in your home?