

Shared Learning

Key learning following a serious incident



Hackney Wick double fatality

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

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Location: Hackney Wick, Anglia Route, Eastern

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Overview

In the early hours of 21st March 2019, two friends left a pub near Hackney Wick station. On the way to a local shop they saw a stationary Freightliner train outside Hackney Wick Station. It was held at a red signal for around 17 minutes.

The two adult males accessed the railway and climbed on top of a container on a freight wagon at the rear of the train, bringing them into close proximity with the live overhead line.

At 00:54 the two men made fatal contact with the overhead lines.

The two men most likely accessed the railway via a hole in the chain link fence that was built on top of a small 900mm wall and embankment. The fence did not prevent access.

Underlying causes

A local investigation found that the stretch of fence in this location had not been physically inspected since 2016.

The hole in the boundary fence allowed easier breaching of the railway boundary at Hackney Wick and was considered an underlying cause.

The Off Track inspectors who did the inspection recorded they could not undertake a tactile inspection of the fence due to vegetation. No attempt to view it from the public side was made, nor alternative measures used (e.g. de-vegetation).

Key message

Where boundary fence inspections cannot include a tactile test, inspectors must use alternative means to view/inspect the fence integrity from wherever possible. This includes accessing from the public/3rd party side, alternative vantage points, by technology (e.g. drones) or removing vegetation to improve visibility (if appropriate).

N.B. Removing vegetation can sometimes be counterproductive where it serves to make the boundary more secure.

Managers must ensure Non-Tactile forms are suitably processed and reviewed, especially for repeat locations. A Special Inspection Notice is due to be issued.

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