

Shared Learning

The Thameslink Programme Issue Date: 25th May 2017 For Further Info Contact mike.netherton@networkrail.co.uk

Issue Number: TLP 073 Title: Unsupported UTX Excavation During Construction

Overview of Event:

As part of signalling and track works an under track crossing (UTX) was required to be installed at New Cross Station, to achieve this an excavation was needed passing under 3 tracks from the Cess to the station platform. The work was planned to be carried out in stages over 2 weekends.

On digging out the first part of the trench using an excavator a Network Rail Project Engineer visited the site to check progress and noticed the sides of the trench had not been supported. He mentioned this to the supervisor who confirmed that work was in progress to install props before personnel entered the trench.

On visiting the site later in the day he noticed personnel in the trench with minimal supports in place. On observing this he mentioned to the Site Supervisor who agreed to install additional support. Then on a third visit he found 2 operatives in the trench with no supporting props.

The works were therefore stopped on the grounds of safety.

Underlying Causes:

- Late design approval impacted on decisions around temporary works requirements.
- Poor decisions were made on the level of site supervision required.
- The Task Briefing Sheet and Work Package Plan lacked specific detail to manage the works
- There was time pressure to complete the UTX to maintain other parts of the programme
- Poor management of temporary works and exclusion zones
- Lack of competent direct supervision by the contractor and minimal overseeing supervision by the main contractor

Photo of event:



Actions Taken As a Result of Investigation:

Recommendations were aimed in two distinct areas of planning and execution of UTX construction including:

- Establish guidelines where the use of CBA (Construction Before Approval) can be used
- For future UTX designs AFC (Authority for Construction) to be put in place at least one week before construction
- Work Package Plans and Task Briefing Sheets to clearly describe the working methods including, temporary works, key resources and number of staff required
- The availability of supervisors to be increased to cover all simultaneous work activities
- Audits of suppliers and onsite works to be added to the Principal Contractors audit programme
- Principal Contractor staff to take part in refresher training on their internal process for the Management of Excavations

General Key Messages:

- Detailed, timely planning is essential to working safely during construction activity
- Temporary works should be robust, checked and followed on site
- Direct competent supervision is paramount in leading a team to work safely
- Any member of staff should feel confident to invoke the 'Worksafe Procedure' if they regard work to be unsafe