

No: ISG 229

Infrastructure Group Safety Bulletin

Hot Axlebox Detector Wrong Side Failure caused by Track Maintenance/Renewal Activity

For the attention of Track Maintenance Engineers, Track Renewal Engineers, Project Managers, Track Maintenance Staff, Signalling Technicians, Signalling Maintenance Engineers, Signalling Maintenance Support Engineers, Technical Support Engineers.

Background: Whilst downloading data from a GE FUES Hot Axlebox Detector recently it was noticed that the HABD had not been recording trains for several weeks. The signalman's monitoring screen confirmed this but indicated that the HABD status was 'OK' and no faults were displayed. A site investigation found the HABD wheel sensors had been unbolted from the track, the rail had been replaced but the wheel sensors had not been refitted. The electrical integrity of the HABD system had not been compromised but it was unable to recognise approaching trains. This constitutes a wrong side failure of a safety critical system.

This is one of several incidents reported recently where HABD equipment has been incapacitated, damaged or a train alarm activated by track maintenance/renewal activity including tamping, rail grinding and rail renewal.

This HABD wheel sensor was unbolted from the rail and left lying on the ballast;
It is critical that equipment is checked, reconnected or re-fitted when work has been completed.



Action Required:

1. Before carrying out any Track Maintenance or Track Renewal activity, staff must assess the site and note any equipment installed on or attached to the track which may be affected by the work.
2. The function responsible for the maintenance of the equipment identified must be contacted and arrangements made for the equipment to be disconnected or removed before commencing work on the track and re-connected or refitted when the track work has been completed.

Issued by: Jim Allenden, Technology Manager (Plant) james.allenden@networkrail.co.uk