

30 October 2014

No: NRS 340

Network Rail Safety Bulletin

Deployment of Lookout Operated Warning Systems (LOWS)

For the attention of: All Network Rail staff and contractors

Background:

There have been recent incidents at Market Harborough, Hest Bank and Thatcham where Network Rail staff and contractors have not been adequately protected by the safe system of work involving Lookout Operated Warning System (LOWS). No one has been injured in any of the reported incidents, but workers had to move out of the path of trains with insufficient warning time. In each case, subsequent analysis of the LOWS data-logger has confirmed the equipment to be operating as designed.

Forward-facing image still from the recent near miss at Hest Bank, LNW



While we are investigating the causes of the incidents, please take the time to consider the following and discuss in your teams:

- Is every effort made during **planning** to undertake work in available possessions, line blockages, behind fences / barriers or separated by distance?
- How can you be certain there is **no train** between the lookout and worksite when work (re)starts?
- Have you encountered **potential distractions** when on site from the environment such as from members of the public, station operations or a noisy environment such as a level crossing? What would you do to make the arrangements safe in these circumstances?
- Are LOWS lookout duties planned to facilitate breaks at least every **two hours** as recommended in the [lookout e-learning](#)?
- When acting as lookout, if you feel your **concentration** has reduced do you send a "train on" warning and agree a suitable break with the LOWS Controller?

For further information contact your local 'LOWS Champion/Advisor' who will be able to clarify information in more detail.