

No: NRS 343

6 November 2014

Network Rail Safety Bulletin

Safe use of Ironmen

For the attention of: All staff involved in the planning, operation and maintenance of Ironmen

Background:

On 1 November 2014 a group of trackworkers were moving 2 x 52ft pieces of rail for approximately a mile and a quarter on the line between Pantyffynnon Jcn and Gwaun-cae-Gurwen in Wales using two pairs of Ironmen.

The Ironmen were being operated down a gradient which was up to 1 in 40, with the load for each pair being just short of 1 tonne. The rail head was contaminated with leaves and it was raining heavily at the time.



Both pairs of Ironmen experienced difficulties during braking; this resulted in them gaining speed to the point the operators could no longer control them. One of the operators of the first pair received a graze injury and another suffered from shock.

The first pair ran away for approximately 5 miles crossing 5 level crossings including narrowly avoiding a team working on the first. The second pair was brought to a halt at the first level crossing. Subsequent inspection of the brakes has shown them to be worn.

Immediate action required:

- Before further use, all Ironmen shall have additional maintenance carried out by the maintainer. The maintenance shall follow the full maintenance requirements for brakes contained in the user guide or handbook.
- Ironmen shall not be used on gradients greater than **1 in 150** until further notice.
- Staff are reminded that a brake test is required at the start of every shift (rotational tests) and once mounted on rail (prior to loading).
- The requirements for planning, operating and maintaining Ironmen including the number of staff required to control the equipment based on the load are contained within NR/PLANT/0200/modules P501, P514 and P702 *Infrastructure Plant Manual*.