

Lessons Learnt from a Significant Event



Date: 26th June 2013

Issued By: Thameslink Programme, HSEA Team, James Forbes House, 27 Great Suffolk Street, London SE1 0NS

Issue Number: TLP 008

Title: London Bridge Station Redevelopment, Falling Materials

For further information contact Sharon Fink, Health & Safety Manager, London Bridge, sharon.fink@networkrail.co.uk

Photos:



Socket where lifting eye was fixed



Lifting Eye and Lifting Block

Overview of Event:

On the 22nd March 2013, chain blocks were being used to lift and install steel staircase sections into one of the arches below London Bridge Station.

The chain blocks were secured to lifting eyes which were in turn screwed into pre-cast sockets in overhead concrete panels.

During the lifting operation one of two eye bolts being used came loose from its socket and along with the chain block fell 14 metres. The second lifting eye and lifting tackle remained in position and the stairs were held by this.

Operatives were in close proximity but there were no injuries. Due to the potential risk the close call was treated as a significant event.

Underlying Causes:

The immediate cause was that one of the two lifting eyes used for the operation unscrewed from its housing.

There were a number of underlying factors that also contributed to the accident:-

- The lifting eyes were installed as per the suppliers instructions (hand tightened) which differed from the manufacturer instructions which indicated need for hand tightened with spanner
- The eye bolts could not be visually checked during the lift as the ceiling was 14m high – this had not been considered in the methodology
- Two different lifting eyes had been used due to procurement issues / availability of the specified eyes
- There were no temporary works assessments for the activity
- A permit to load had not been issued for the works

Key Messages for Lifting Activities: (note the items below are general and not all linked to the event)

- Relevant lifting methodology / temporary works assessments should be in place and understood by all those involved in the activity
- Exclusion zones should always be implemented and managed beneath lifting activities
- Only lifting equipment that is appropriately designed and rated for the task shall be used and should be inspected by a competent person prior to use
- Task briefings should be in place for all tasks and where specific supplier / manufacturer information is available these should be incorporated within the task
- Only people who are competent to install equipment should undertake specific tasks