

Date: 18th December 2014

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

Issue Number: TLP 026

Title: London Bridge – Undermining of Track (14th September 2014)

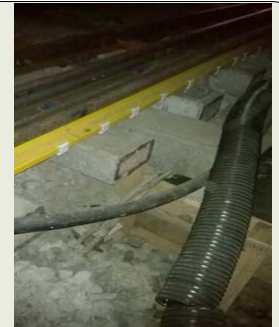
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Overview of Event:

During station construction activity, part of the track bed to platform 12 was undermined. The effected track was under possession and not open to traffic so no passenger, freight or Engineering Trains were put at risk during the excavation works. The possession however, was surrendered without the affected area being appropriately checked and there were no Infrastructure Compliance Checks (Form 'G') under the 'Track Back' process undertaken.

Diagram/Photo of event:

The undermined trackbed



Underlying Causes:

- Whilst there was communication within the team during both the planning and execution stages, it appears no one person had absolute clarity or accountability on what was required and the paperwork was generic.
- The Supervisor had no involvement in the planning and had not been briefed on the WPP or Task Briefing.
- Documentation was generic (WPP, TBS & Permit to Dig) and did not identify the risk / control to the trackbed.
- Processes did not operate as intended. The Point of Work Risk assessment had not been completed by the supervisor and the Permit System was not exchanged between shifts and had never been signed off when the works were completed.
- Variations in drawings contributed to lack of clarity with regards to the proximity of the intended excavation and the sleeper ends.
- The requests and booking of COSS's and a Track Handback engineer was informal.
- The issue of proximity to sleeper end was identified late which meant it was only in the week before the works that replacement ballast was ordered, and the Possession Planner informed.
- There was a lack of knowledge within the team about working around the track environment and the specific track back requirements, although the team relies on the Rail Supervisor for guidance in this aspect.
- The Rail Supervisor was aware that the excavation had been backfilled and handback forms not completed by either himself or the Balfour Beatty Team (who could have done this on their behalf had they been requested to).

Actions Taken As a Result of Investigation:

- Supervisors are being reminded of their responsibilities of completing point of work risk assessments. Checks to confirm these are being completed are being undertaken.
- Both day and nightshift teams are being briefed on the hierarchy and responsibilities for making decisions on site to proceed with works where concern is raised.
- The team are being reminded that documentation should detail specific significant risks / controls.
- The team are reviewing how documentation is briefed to Supervisors responsible for the works.
- The Possession management booking system is being reviewed.
- A rail awareness course is being reviewed for applicability to raise knowledge in the team.
- The permit system is being reviewed and updated to ensure there is a robust process for i) handover between shifts and ii) signed-off closure of permits.
- A shift overlap will be introduced to allow face to face handover of the works.
- Consideration is being given to stocking kango packers in the stores so that they can be used under the direction of the Rail Supervisor to prevent over reliance on others to provide this.
- The Rail Supervisor is being re-briefed on Critical Rail Temperature management.
- During major possession works when the NR TLP War Room is in operation, any such track safety issue could be raised with them for assistance.

General Key Messages:

- Planning of works should take into account rail interface.
- Resources required should be booked and confirmed in advance of works.
- Arrangements should be in place to provide assurance that processes / documentation are working.
- Civils workers should have a rail awareness briefing when their works interface with the railway.