Network Rail

Shared Learning

SIEMENS

Issue Number: TLP043   Title: Lifting Operations Failure

Overview of Event:

On the 12th September a safety event occurred in the Southwark area whereby a signal head (POSA – Proceed on Sight Authority) was dropped causing damage. A close call was also experienced in the fact no exclusion zone was in place around the lift and the signal head narrowly missed an operative. The signal was being hauled up onto a gantry using webbing when it gave way and dropped as the webbing came undone. The damage and close call were not reported at the time of the event but came to light a few days later through another contractor

Causes:

Immediate - Unsuitable lifting method was employed

Root and Underlying Causes

- It was intended to fix signal to the gantry before lifting into position but the signal was omitted to be taken to site
- Methods of lifting are defined by 'custom and practice' and not prescribed methods
- POSA Signal heads are not fitted with lifting fixtures or 'eyes' to enable slings or chains to be attached

Photo of Event:
Mock up of scenario

Actions Taken As a Result of the Investigations:

- Operatives involved briefed on the need and importance of reporting close calls and their behaviours investigated via the 'Fair Culture Matrix'

- Safe method of work and risk assessment to be introduced specifically for lifting signal heads and equipment onto gantries

- Examination of lifting methods and design of objects to be lifted

General Key Messages:

- Work Package Plans and Task Briefing sheets need to detail specific methods for lifting objects and not be generic

- Where appropriate collective methods need to be explored at the design stage for structures whereby temporary or inbuilt lifting fixtures are included as well as lifting features such as 'lifting eyes' on objects to be lifted

- Greater understanding of the benefit of raising close calls around behaviours and the consequences when these are raised