

Shared Learning

Key learning following a serious incident

Removal of level crossing gates during construction works

Issued to: All Network Rail line managers, safety professionals and Achilles registered contractors

Ref: NRL 15/02

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Location: Rowston

Contact: [Stuart White](#), Head of S&SD



Overview

During project works, arrangements were made for the gates and posts at a User Worked Crossing (UWC) to be removed to allow clearance for a combine harvester to cross the line.

This was done without consulting Network Rail Operations and without a Level Crossing Attendant present.

The usual access, the level crossing at Rowston, had been closed to vehicle traffic for the project works and the planned diversionary route for traffic was not suitable for the transit of heavy agricultural machinery.

Underlying causes

Agricultural use of the level crossing and UWC were not fully considered in planning.

The proposed method of working was not adequately communicated between Alliance Partners and/or Network Rail Operations.

There was no written process / instructions to manage the revised method of working.

The level of supervision at the crossing during works was inadequate.

Key message

For works where there is a requirement to close level crossings, specific consideration must be given, during the planning process to:

- The needs of the local community and the type of roads designated as diversionary routes, especially in rural locations.
- Users of the crossing, including LGV vehicles and farmers who may require to move large machinery over the diversionary routes and crossings.
- The times of year for planned road closures, including the impact of increased agricultural vehicle movements during harvest, and the impact of large and heavy agricultural on the road network.