

Shared Learning from a Formal Investigation



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Title: **Unidentified twist fault following an embankment slip at Stonegate**

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Overview of Event

- Following weeks of unusually high and persistent rain a number of embankment slips occurred on the Kent route including the part of the Down Hastings Line at Stonegate on 09 February 2014. Both lines were blocked.
- On 10 February the RAM attended site and reported the track in a catastrophic state and hanging in the air (shown in the above photo).
- A Contractor was contacted to rebuild the embankment and the lines were re-opened on 01 March with a TSR of 20mph on the up line and 5mph hour on the down.
- The Contractor were also contracted to monitor the lines track geometry three times a day and report the figures back to the TME and Scheme Project Manager. Any trigger points would be acted upon.
- On 18 March the TME undertook a routine examination of the line and found a L2 fault and immediately closed it to traffic.
- The L2 twist fault was visible even to an untrained eye but not reported by the Contractor.

Underlying Causes:

- The Contractor's Site Agent did not know how to apply the correct action in producing the track monitoring data. He and his team did not appreciate the risks in not reporting visibly poor track condition. Therefore they did not produce interpretable data for the TME.
- The TME and other recipients did not question that the data supplied was not interpretable.
- Adherence to NR/BS/L1/045 was instructed by the Project Manager but no guidance provided.
- The Project Manager did not provide a full AMP as he believed the works to be 'emergency' in nature.
- The unprecedented amount of rainfall meant that there were many slip sites so more experienced and preferred contractors were already engaged elsewhere and the Contractor did not receive the higher level of management that their inexperience required.
- An assumption was made that the Contractor knew what they were doing in track monitoring.
- A CRE was supplied by the Contractor for the civils work but not the track works. This would have provided track engineering management.

Key Messages:

- 1) Once the immediate risks created in an emergency have been controlled the full rigour of the Asset Management Plan (AMP) process must be applied to identify and control the risks during recovery and remediation work.
- 2) If any track geometry data is un-interpretable by recipients then they should report this immediately.
- 3) Project Managers should give a higher degree of monitoring and management to those contractors who are less experienced.