

Lessons Learnt from a Significant Event



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Title: Rotherhithe Business Estate, Approach to London Bridge – Damage to vehicles from falling ballast
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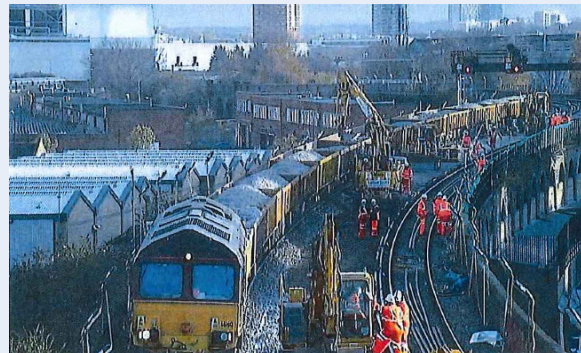
Overview of Event:

- On 30th November as part of track renewal works base ballast was delivered by Engineering Train which was positioned on a road adjacent to a parapet wall on a section of track positioned on a viaduct.
- Whilst unloading base stone from open Falcon wagons, around 30 pieces of ballast fell from track level down to street level from the side of the viaduct parapet wall and into an industrial estate below.
- This caused damage to 1 car and 2 vans all belonging to business whose premises were located in an arch beneath.

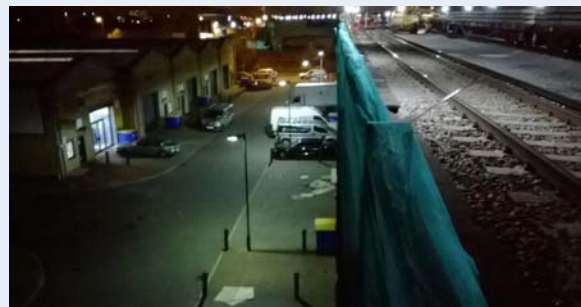
Underlying Causes:

There are a number of underlying facts that contributed to the accident: -

- Although debris netting was highlighted in the risk assessment this was only considered for filling wagons with spoil rather than unloading ballast.
- The debris netting used was not robust enough to capture ballast spill and was not fixed at the base of a hand rail section on the viaduct allowing ballast to spill under the netting.
- The RRV Operators and Machine Controllers were only briefed to take additional care when loading spoil and this was not reinforced to the same operators for unloading ballast.
- Due to the cab position of the RRV Operators they could not see or have been aware of ballast falling the other side of the wagons whilst unloading.



Ballast being unloaded



Debris Netting and view from viaduct to industrial estate



Vehicle Damage

Key Messages:

- Review and monitor risk assessments to make sure they address all aspects of a work activity and consider the geography of where the work activity is being carried out
- When working close to a public interface consider whether additional exclusion zones should be implemented
- When specifying control measures make sure they are robust enough to provide protection
- When specific risks are identified make sure they are sufficiently briefed to the operatives carrying out the work