

Lessons Learnt: Local & Formal Investigations



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Issued By: Crossrail West HS&E Team, Davidson House, Reading

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Title: Crossrail Programme, Lookout Struck By Train

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Immediate Cause:

Intermediate lookout moved from a position of safety (where he had been placed by the COSS) to a position where he was standing foul of the Up Relief

Underlying Causes:

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

- The lookout may have become disengaged from his task for some reason and this resulted in a lack of situational awareness. Some circumstantial evidence to indicate that the hood of his hooded top may have been pulled over his head at the moment of impact which could have contributed to his lack of situational awareness
- No strategy to maximise levels of protection, to reduce unassisted lookout protection to a minimum, or provide higher-level protection for multiple workgroups
- Train horn sounded only once (1.6km from area where LO was struck) – impact of 'sea of orange' on drivers travelling through Crossrail area

Overview of Event

- On Friday 22nd March 2013, a team of surveyors were working 'on or near the line' with lookout protection adjacent to the 'Piggeries Yard' near Stockley, West Drayton. The purpose of the work was to determine control points for work being delivered on the Crossrail West project.
- At the time of the incident, the surveyors were working in the cess adjacent to the Up Relief with intermediate and distant look outs positioned on both sides of the work party.
- Separate to the survey activity, a team of operatives working for another contractor, were undertaking troughing replacement work adjacent to the Up relief at the London end of the work site. They were working in the same vicinity as the distant lookout for the survey party. This work was also being delivered for the Crossrail West project and the team was employing its own Safe System of Work (SSoW) with their own site lookout.
- Shortly before the incident, the survey party Controller of Site Safety (COSS) replaced the intermediate lookout on the London side due to concerns regarding the performance of the individual undertaking those duties. The individual brought in as a replacement was placed in a position of safety by the COSS who then returned to the main work party.
- Shortly thereafter, train 2P38 passed the site of the survey work moving towards London. It struck the intermediate lookout at 10.49am. The intermediate lookout was standing with his back to the oncoming train and suffered severe injuries to his right arm and shoulder.

Key Message:

Major programmes need to reduce the risk of using lookout protection by actively pursuing alternative technical solutions

Although not determined as an underlying cause, guidance on the safe use of mobile phones when on or near the line is required.

Major programmes need to consider, as part of their risk management strategy, a means of providing enhanced levels of workforce protection (e.g. more green zones, ATWS, TOWS, or LOWS,) in situations where this could not normally be justified for a single workgroup activity.

Major programmes and projects should consult with TOCs/FOCs on significant work activities on or near the line.