

MEWP basket failure – RIDDOR dangerous occurrence

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

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Location: Cowlairs

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Overview

On 3 March 2017 a Road Rail Mobile Elevated Work Platform (MEWP) accessed the track to undertake installation work. While waiting for instruction to pass a set of points the boom holding the basket sheared and the basket holding an operator fell to the ground.

The basket was approximately 50cm from the ground when it tipped over and struck the ground settling at a 35° angle. The operative was uninjured.

The machine was new when it was delivered to site on 9 December 2016. The fitter recorded damage to the MEWP on 26 December 2016. When the machine was serviced on 8 February 2017 the damage was neither recorded nor repaired.

On examination after the failure, the basket end pin of the fly jib cylinder was bent sufficiently to cause a fatigue failure in the rotator bracket that connects the basket to the fly jib. Two or three months passed between the initial damage and the failure.

Underlying causes

- Impact damage to the MEWP basket is believed to have been caused by a collision whilst stabled in the compound.
- The damage indicates that the MEWP was stabled with the basket in a lowered position.
- The collision was not reported.
- Observable damage was reported / logged but not investigated or acted upon with a repair.
- Recording visible damage discontinued even though the damage had not been subject to further investigation e.g. non-destructive testing.

Key message

Effective traffic management and reporting methods in compounds and depots will prevent a similar accident from happening again:

- Create designated areas for MEWPs in compounds and depots. Discuss the methods that will protect this type of plant from collision.
- Wherever possible stable MEWP baskets in the elevated position when not in use.
- All plant movements in compounds must be controlled by a banksman. Attention must be given to how this is achieved for shared compounds.
- Systems are required to facilitate the reporting of collision and / or damage to plant.
- The process for responding to / rectifying damaged plant in depots and compounds needs to be clear and checked to make sure it is effective.

Copies of Shared Learning documents are available on [Safety Central](#)