

Safety Bulletin

A serious incident has taken place



Kings Cross remodelling runaway MEWP

Issued to: **All Network Rail line managers, safety professionals and accredited contractors**

Ref: NRB21-04

Date of issue: 17/06/2021

Location: Kings Cross Remodelling, East Coast route

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Overview

On 16th May 2021 at around 03:30am Pod-Trak were on-tracking their Mobile Elevating Work Platforms (MEWPs) for OLE works. While on-tracking the third MEWP, it ran away approximately 600m into Canal Tunnel. The MEWP ran through the worksite marker but remained within the possession limits. The team working with the MEWP were unharmed.

RAIB inspected the MEWP to establish if there was a mechanical failure. The initial findings were that there appeared to be insufficient brake force to hold the MEWP on the Road Rail Access Point which had a 1.55 gradient.

Later, under test conditions, the MEWP started to move at a gradient of 1.50. A further test was conducted with the hydraulic brake bypass valve closed during the test. When retested, the MEWP braking system worked correctly. The cause of the runaway appears to be that the override valve for the rail wheel parking brake system had been left in bypass during maintenance sometime before the shift.

A second Safety Bulletin will be issued if any further learning is identified.

Discussion Points

- What checks are undertaken after maintenance to ensure plant is correctly set up to be used on site?
- What assurance is done by plant providers to confirm that maintenance checks are completed correctly and it is ready for use?
- What simple checks can be undertaken at site to assure users that kit has been safely maintained?
- How should we consider runaway risk during planning?