



Rail slide off moving vehicle

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

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Location: Hitchin Delivery Unit, Eastern region

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Overview

At 8.15am on 6 January 2022 a two-person logistics team arrived at Hitchin DU in a Network Rail heavy goods vehicle (HGV) to collect and move two x 54-foot rails.

A COSS met them on site and under a sidings possession the two rails were placed on the back of the HGV with the lorry-mounted crane. The rails were secured using three ratchet straps in line with normal practice.

As the HGV manoeuvred to leave the yard the driver heard a noise and stopped. The rails had slipped off the back of the HGV and were touching the ground.

The staff had loaded the HGV many times in the same configuration. It may be that the icy conditions (-4 degrees) helped the rails to slide. But most importantly, the 54-foot rails projected significantly beyond both front and rear load frames, creating flex as the HGV manoeuvred. This type of HGV allows 45-foot rail to sit on the load points without excessive overhang and flex. An investigation is underway.

In January 2021 a similar incident occurred while a lorry was driving on a main A-road. On this occasion a length of rail slid off the lorry completely as it was not gripped by the webbing straps.

Immediate action required

Given the potential consequences of this incident the following mitigations must now be applied whilst the investigation continues:

- No rail longer than 45-foot must be moved using Network Rail's road fleet.
- Rail over 45-foot long must only be moved by road by DHL.
- Loading must comply with our procedures and loads must be checked as being secure.
- All drivers must undertake a load movement safety check before setting off.