



Excavator put on an open line

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

Ref: NRB22-02

Date of issue: 10/02/2022

Location: Smugglers Lane Access Point, Dawlish, W&W Region

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Overview

On 26th January 2022 at 00:32, an Engineering Supervisor (ES) for a worksite within the East Midlands Route (B) was granted permission to commence work.

The ES called the Machine Controller (MC) identified on his paperwork to confirm that the machine could be on-tracked.

The MC who was contacted was actually on site at Parsons Tunnel, Western Region (A), following a change to the original plan (where he was designated as the East Midlands MC).

The Parsons Tunnel MC on-tracked his machine at 00:32 at Smugglers Lane Access Point before being challenged at 00:37 by the Principal Contractor Supervisor and told to remove the machine as the possession had not yet been granted.

The Parsons Tunnel machine had been placed on an open line. This led to the discovery of the mis-communication. Whilst there was no train in the immediate vicinity, the risk identified following this incident was deemed significant.

Discussion Points

- Where possible, the ES and COSS should meet in person before any machines are on-tracked.
- Are Spoken Safety Critical Communications (SSCC) routinely checked to ensure compliance?
- All Safety Critical roles MUST use SSCC protocols as per training and competency, both parties have a responsibility to undertake SSCC to come to a clear understanding. Do you feel confident communications are clear and effective?
- How are late changes of personnel managed, documented and communicated?
- How do you challenge instances where SSCC is not followed? Remember, Take 5 for safety and invoke the Worksafe Procedure if there is any doubt.
- How do you ensure you are in the right location and have the right safety protection arrangements before starting work?