Shared Learning

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every day

Use of trolleys on the line

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

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Location: Challow & Twickenham

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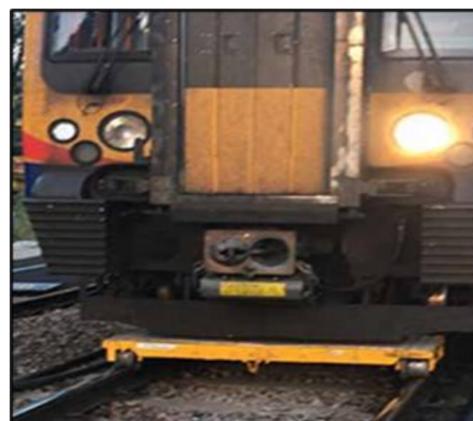
Overview/Underlying causes

Overview

At 06:09 on 21 October 2021, a passenger train travelling at 123 mph struck a hand trolley on the track near Challow, Oxfordshire. The train was the first to pass through the area after completion of overnight maintenance work. This was the latest of several incidents involving trolleys being left on the line following engineering work.

A similar accident happened close to Twickenham station six weeks before Challow on 8 September 2021. On this occasion, an empty passenger train travelling from Staines to London Waterloo struck a hand trolley on the Up main line on the approach to Twickenham station.

The Rail Accident Investigation Branch have concluded an investigation into the incident at Challow and have made some recommendations aimed at preventing a reoccurrence.

This Shared Learning is focused on three specific causal factors from the incidents that occurred.

Underlying causes

- The trolleys had red lights fitted but they were not illuminated.
  The use of the lights (when illuminated) would have provided a visual indication that the trolley had been left on the line.
- The Line Clear Verification (LCV) process was not used.
  Had this process been used correctly, it would have indicated to those responsible that a trolley had been left on the line by use of the relevant Vehicle Management Forms.

- Assurance activities around LCV and the inspection of working red lights were not robust.
  Had assurance activities taken place, the incorrect use/lack of understanding of LCV and inoperable red lights on the trolleys would have been identified and corrected.

Key message

- All trolleys used on the line should be fitted with working red lights, these lights shall be maintained and used whenever a trolley or other similar equipment is used on the line.
- GERT8000 Handbook 10 is in the process on being amended to remove the option of using a red flag on trolleys.

- The Line Clear Verification process shall be used in axle counter areas and should be considered for use in areas with different methods of train detection.

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