

The importance of observing exclusion zones



everyone
home safe
every day

Hello everyone,

This week I wanted to write about exclusion zones, personal responsibility when using different types of equipment and planning right first time.

One of our life-saving rules at Network Rail is to 'never enter the agreed exclusion zone, unless directed to by the person in charge'. There is a minimum distance that must be maintained between people and equipment while it is in operation to keep everyone safe. This forms a vital part of every plan to carry out tasks.

Whether it's hand-held pieces of equipment or heavy machinery, and for different disciplines, such as Welding, Pway, Off track, they all have their own exclusion zones to mitigate risk and make sure people are not unnecessarily exposed to hazards.



Rob Cairns,
Regional Managing Director

This topic area conjures vivid memories for me. During lockdown I was summoned by the HSE to the coroner's court to answer for an incident that had occurred some years earlier in my previous role as Capital Delivery Director on the East Midlands Route, Eastern region.

On the 24 May 2017 at the Stanton Cross Development at Wellingborough, Christinel Osolos, a contractor working on behalf of Galiford Try, was fatally crushed due to an inadequately controlled lift whilst working on the construction of a river bridge. A beam was being lowered by a crane onto 'bearers' when the beam slid trapping Christinel.

In the interests of learning, I've copied and pasted the questions I was asked by the coroner from the read-out, which frankly, I still find as chilling as I did then.

- Can you please define the scope of work that Network Rail had responsibility for with regards to the Stanton Cross project?

- We understand there was confusion regarding the termination of your appointment as Principal Designer. Please can you explain what the issues were and how the end of the contract was communicated to those employed by you on this project and to the client and other relevant parties including other designers?
- How were Network Rail Infrastructure fulfilling their role as Principal Designer at the time of the incident under investigation?
- Who was the client that appointed Network Rail? Please provide a copy of this appointment in writing.
- What other Designers (as defined by CDM) were involved in the project? Were any of these designers appointed by Network Rail?
- If any of the designers were appointed by Network Rail, what steps were taken to assess their suitability and capability of carrying out their CDM roles?
- When was Network Rail Infrastructure appointed as Principal Designer on the project? What other CDM duty holders had been appointed by this point?
- How regularly did Network Rail meet with the following parties to discuss the project (both in the construction and pre-construction stages): a) The client? b) The other designers involved in the project? c) The Principal Contractor
- How else did Network rail ensure coordination between the parties in the above question?
- How did Network Rail Infrastructure assure themselves that they had the necessary corporate knowledge, experience, and organisational capability to carry out the Principal Designer role?
- How and when did Network Rail communicate with stakeholders (Principal Contractor, Client, etc) as part of the risk assessment process?
- In terms of managing health and safety risks did Network Rail carry out design reviews during the pre-construction and construction stages? If so, what were the outcomes of each design review exercise?
- What monitoring arrangements were in place for ensuring compliance with your designer duties under CDM?

A common misconception is that the person operating the equipment is solely responsible for maintaining an exclusion zone from everyone else working in the area. This is not the case. It is everyone's

responsibility to be aware of and observe exclusion zones. You should only ever enter an exclusion zone with express permission. Always 'ask before you pass'. The operator should be aware of their surroundings but there may be blind spots.

This links to the conversations we've been having around planning, assurance and communication. There should always be enough room on site to observe exclusion zones and again, this is everyone's responsibility. The person planning it, the person briefing it, the person delivering it. When used correctly, detcom headsets should form part of the plan for a safe way of communicating to remove any reason for a person to be near moving machinery. You can also use back to back radios and MyZone, whichever method of safe communication is used, it is vital this is agreed in the planning stages.

We need to reinforce the message that everyone is responsible for safety and if you're not in the exclusion zone, you can't get hurt. We should be rigorous in our challenge of the safe and effective work plan. It needs to be fit for purpose, the right plan for the right task ensuring the plan can be executed whilst keeping our people safe.

If you're unsure about the exclusion zones for the plant or equipment that you're using you can check here in the [Infra-plant manual](#), you can check [MyZone](#) and always follow the [019 standard and assurance](#) process when ensuring a plan is fit for purpose.

I realise a number of my messages contain stern and stark information, but its important for me to speak about how my experiences have shaped my thinking on safety, and I very much hope and trust that this context is helpful.

Stay safe

Rob



Great



Okay



Poor

This update is provided by the Wales and Western Communications team. For any queries, please contact walesandwesterncomms@networkrail.co.uk



This message was sent to sam.feierabend@networkrail.co.uk using [NewZapp](#). This email is for Network Rail employees only. If this email is no longer relevant to you, please contact us.

POWERED BY

