



NEAR MISS HAS ECHOES OF NETWORK RAIL FATALITIES

WHAT HAPPENED ON THE LINE AT MARGAM, BETWEEN CARDIFF AND SWANSEA?

On the 3rd of July 2019, while the Controller of Site Safety (a person qualified and authorised by Network Rail to ensure safe practice for work occurring on or near rail infrastructure including safety critical responsibilities whilst working trackside similar to Authorised Person or SAP) was temporarily working further down the line, the team started work on an open railway line using a petrol-engine impact driver to tighten bolts in a railway crossing.

The team were all wearing ear defenders due to the high noise levels. When a bolt seized, they became focused on the job in front of them, with no one looking out.

When the train approached at around 50mph, Gareth Delbridge (64) and Michael Lewis (58) were struck, and tragically were fatally injured. A third man escaped impact with just inches to spare.

In sharing this information with you UK Power Networks firstly extends its deepest sympathies to the families of those involved, and is taking action to ensure a similar tragedy can never occur on our works.



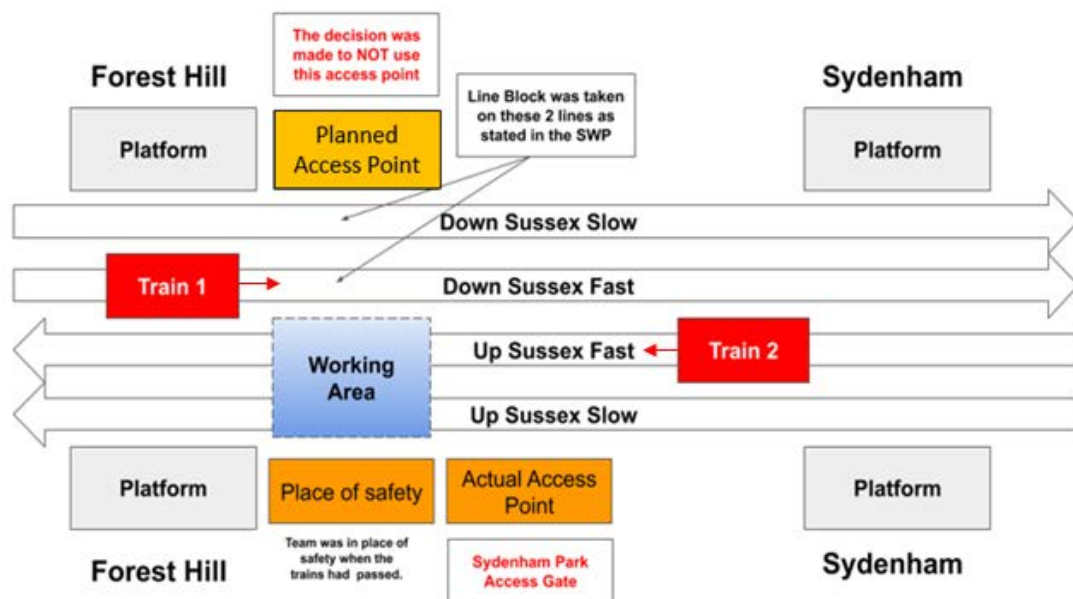
Network Rail's investigation into the accident made a number of recommendations, which include:

- The Person in Charge must be involved in planning and delivering their work.
- Responsible managers should check risk assessments and method statements mitigate the risk before authorising work.
- Colleagues must comply with the safe system of work.
- Late changes to plans, and taking on extra tasks require focus and diligence to reduce risk.
- Risk awareness and safety culture need to be strengthened.

It is the responsibility of line management to ensure all appropriate employees are issued with this document and to check their understanding of its content. This document will be subject to compliance audits within 14 days from the date of issue.

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE UKPN INCIDENT?

In December 2019, a team working for UK Power Networks were tasked with undertaking maintenance activities and fitting a track-monitoring device between Forest Hill and Sydenham Park stations.



The parallels with what had occurred at Margam are stark...

The 'Safe Work Pack', equivalent to RAMS, was not reviewed or signed off as required ahead of the work. This should have meant that the work did not go ahead.

A change to the access point was made on the night of the work, meaning access was gained via the Sydenham Park access gate and not the access point that had been planned, deviating for convenience.

A line blockage was required on the 'Down Sussex' lines, but there was an error on the booking that had been submitted, with both Up and Down lines requested. Whilst this was picked up on the night by the Signaller, had the work pack been reviewed beforehand this could have been addressed.

The COSS sets the team to work on the 'Up Sussex' lines in error. Whilst the team question the work location, the work is not called to a halt and an opportunity to put safety first is missed.

At 01:18, the Signaller calls the team off the track ahead of 'Train 1' passing. From the place of safety, the team question why they have been called off and are told it is due to the close proximity of the train.

At 01:22, whilst this is being discussed 'Train 2' passes at 60mph on the Up Sussex Fast line, through the working area occupied only minutes earlier.

Disaster was only averted by the team discussing what they felt were unusual circumstances.

OUR RESPONSE

- UK Power Networks and the EDISON Alliance have taken this incident extremely seriously. It is clear that the outcome on the night was down to luck and not good safety management on site, or in the earlier planning of the job.
- A robust response is underway, with a panel reviewing the end-to-end process for working on or nearby railway infrastructure. The working group includes representatives with expertise in this area from Capital Programme and our Alliance partners, Network Operations, UK Power Networks Services, Keltbray, CRE and Network Rail.
- The management failings that allowed this incident will be addressed with robust actions to ensure that in future there can be no single points of failure in ensuring our colleagues are put in harm's way.
- Safety remains our absolute priority and further learning from the panel will be shared in an update to this Safety Alert in due course.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

- Ensure work is planned, and that risk assessments, method statements and other safety documents are properly reviewed, discussed and signed off before work commences.
- Reinforce the requirement to undertake a site briefing with all colleagues before work commences. It is vital that all members of the working party understand the control measures that are in place to ensure their safety before any work commences.
- Ensure that every member of the working party is clear as to their individual role, and has permission and a responsibility to raise concerns.
- Reinforce that deviation to any agreed plan of work requires further risk assessment, and the discussion and agreement as to the control measures required to ensure the safety of all parties.
- If in any doubt, work must stop to allow a review.
- Each of us has a personal responsibility to stop and challenge if anything is thought to be unsafe or unclear.

This near miss could have seen our colleagues fatally injured.

As we look to build on our good safety performance, please ask yourself, *what else are we missing?*

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