

Health, Safety, Quality and Environmental Alert

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Near miss on limited clearance structure

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Author:

Steve Milroy

(To be posted on HSQE Notice Boards for a Period of 1 MONTH from date of issue)

Overview

On 23 March a four-man protection team of three lookouts and a COSS were supporting an Earthworks Examiner undertaking site inspections.

Whilst walking between sites, two distant lookouts were ahead of the group around a curve providing warning of trains approaching on the Up line. Upon reaching a limited clearance structure the COSS, site lookout and examiner stopped in a position of safety to assess the protection arrangements.

The COSS asked the site lookout to signal to the intermediate lookout positioned ahead in the Down Cess to move further on to increase the warning time required to cross safely.

Whilst the COSS was reading the SSOWP the site lookout crossed the limited clearance structure.

When the lookout was in the middle of the structure the intermediate lookout warned a train was approaching and the site lookout had to run to the end of the structure before the train reached his location.

The train approached the group at 70mph.

After the event there was some confusion in reporting the incident to Control; because of the use of the term 'close call' the Controller believed the COSS was reporting a close call rather than a 'near miss' and referred him to the close call reporting line.



Discussion Points

- What would assist the planner in identifying limited clearances in the SSOWP?
- What action must be taken when a COSS needs to review the safe system of work?
- How do make sure you have a clear understanding of safety arrangements when on track and what do you do when circumstances change?
- How would you report an occasion where you believed that you or your workgroup had been involved in a near miss with a train?
- How would you describe the differences between a 'near miss', an 'operational close call' and a 'close call'?