

Oliver Stewart
RAIB Recommendation Handling Manager



23 July 2025

Mr Andy Lewis
Deputy Chief Inspector of Rail Accidents

Dear Andy,

RAIB Report: Track worker struck by a train near Surbiton station, south-west London on 9 February 2021

I write to provide an update¹ on the action taken in respect of recommendation 2 addressed to ORR in the above report, published on 25 May 2022.

The annex to this letter provides details of actions taken in response to the recommendation and the status decided by ORR. The status of recommendation 2 is **'Closed'**.

We do not propose to take any further action in respect of the recommendation, unless we become aware that any of the information provided has become inaccurate, in which case I will write to you again.

We will publish this response on the ORR website.

Yours sincerely,

Oliver Stewart

¹ In accordance with Regulation 12(2)(b) of the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005

Recommendation 2

The intent of this recommendation is to support and improve the judgement of train drivers as to whether track workers are in close proximity to their train, and reinforce the necessary action to take if there is a possibility that track workers are likely to be struck.

The Rail Delivery Group, with the support of RSSB, should identify the issues drivers face in judging the proximity of track workers to the swept path of their train. They should develop training and briefing materials to better prepare drivers to make accurate judgements as to when track workers are at risk of being struck and to react appropriately, for example by sounding the urgent warning. The Rail Delivery Group should share the resulting training and briefing material with transport undertakings.

ORR decision

1. In response to the recommendation, RDG and RSSB have explored means of improving train driver understanding of the proximity of track workers to the path of a moving train. RSSB have issued edition 71 in the RED video series, covering the risks faced by trackside workers. One of the aims of RED 71 is to improve driver knowledge and awareness of the track worker safety programme (TWS).
2. A further industry workstream relevant to the recommendation is T1273 – optimising drivers' use of audible warnings. The project was started in response to recommendation 11 in the Margam RAIB report and a recognition of the need to make use of the horn in emergencies more effective. The findings of the project were incorporated into the Rule Book (September 2024), reducing the amount of different warnings and tones used by drivers so they are easier to understand and carry out. The emergency warning is now a continuous sounding of the horn.
3. RAIB acknowledge that a driver sounding an emergency warning is the very bottom of the hierarchy of risk control and only necessary when all other risk controls for a safe system of work have failed. Network Rail has invested significant resource in more effective ways of reducing the risk to track workers from moving trains. The RED 71 is a useful aid for drivers' appreciation of the swept envelope and a proportionate response to the RAIB recommendation, given the inherent weakness of making split-second judgements about whether to sound the horn or not.
4. After reviewing the information provided ORR has concluded that, in accordance with the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005, RDG has:
 - taken the recommendation into consideration; and
 - has taken action to close it.

Status: Closed.

Previously reported to RAIB

5. On 24 May 2023 ORR reported the following:

RDG is planning to address the recommendation by developing a briefing for drivers that included information and guidance on the swept envelope of a train. The briefing will also cover changes to track worker methods of work and what that may mean for drivers.

Update

6. On 26 March 2024 the Rail Delivery Group provided the following update:

Following ongoing concerns (Ref. Letter of 6 April 2022 from RDG to RAIB) about the achievability of this recommendation, the April 2024 meeting of the Operations Standards Forum is due to consider the recommendation to inform an industry response and potential for existing industry mechanisms to support improved driver awareness of and track worker safety.

A further update on this recommendation and the OSF meeting will be provided by early June 2024.

7. On 7 August 2024 the Rail Delivery Group provided the following update:

RDG received a letter dated 23 March 2022 from RAIB in respect of RAIB Accident Report 05/2022 Track Worker Struck by a train near Surbiton Station, Southwest London 9 February 2021 and specifically recommendation 2 within it. This states: "The intent of this recommendation is to support and improve the judgement of train drivers as to whether track workers are in close proximity to their train, and reinforce the necessary action to take if there is a possibility that track workers are likely to be struck. The Rail Delivery Group, with the support of RSSB, should identify the issues drivers face in judging the proximity of track workers to the swept path of their train. They should develop training and briefing materials to better prepare drivers to make accurate judgements as to when track workers are at risk of being struck and to react appropriately, for example by sounding the urgent warning. The Rail Delivery Group should share the resulting training and briefing material with transport undertakings (paragraph 139b)."

We understand that the then RDG Head of Operations and Safety (Phil Barrett) responded to RAIB on 22 April 2022 expressing concerns that the recommendation could have a detrimental effect on drivers, causing a cognitive overload at times of higher activity and that a driver is not always aware if a track worker on the adjacent line is permitted and that the recommendation should not be made unless it could be proved that it would make a positive change to rail system safety.

Following recent engagement and consultation with the Train Operator Operations Standards Forum (OSF) in April 2024, the industry member forum run by Rail Partners, Train Operator representatives did not believe that Train Operators should be solely responsible for fulfilling the recommendation fully. However, to try to address the recommendation, RSSB and Rail Partners have undertaken various

activities as detailed below to mitigate the risk and educate drivers on both the Track Worker Safety programme and the swept path of their train.

One specific example includes RSSB in collaboration with Rail Partners and Network Rail will be producing edition 71 of RED this is scheduled for publication in January 2025. This video aims to provide drivers, amongst other operational roles, an understanding of the Track Worker Safety (TWS) programme and how this has changed the position of track workers in relation to the train. It was highlighted at the OSF, that when the TWS programme was first introduced Train Operators and subsequently drivers were not briefed on the programme and what this meant in relation to the position of a track worker in relation to a train. The aim of RED 71 is to address this gap and provide an overview of possible training for drivers to get a better understanding of the swept path of the train.

In addition, RSSB conducted research project (T1273) Optimising Drivers' use of audible warnings which was published in August 2023. This project provided recommendations on how to optimise and simplify requirements for the use of the train horn. The project makes recommendations into the optimal use of the train horn and the Rule Book (Modules GERT8000-TW1, GERT8000-OTM, GERT8000-SS2, GERT8000-TW5, GERT8000-TW7 and GERT8000-TW8) will be updated (in September 2024) to include some of the recommendations from the research.

Therefore, RDG would like to propose that the Surbiton Rec. 2 be closed following the production and publication of RED edition 71, and that alongside the conclusion of research project (T1273) and subsequent revision made to Rule Book satisfies the closure of the recommendation.

8. On 18 June 2025 the Rail Delivery Group provided the following update:

RDG believes we have satisfied the criteria for the Recommendation 2 from the RAIB Surbiton Report (05/2022) to be closed. We have worked with RSSB and the wider industry as directed to improve the training and mutual understanding of train drivers to the actions and roles of track workers.

Following engagement and consultation with the Train Operator Operations Standards Forum (OSF) in April 2024, the industry member forum run by Rail Partners, Train Operator representatives did not believe that Train Operators should be solely responsible for fulfilling the recommendation. However, to try to address the recommendation, RSSB, Rail Partners and Rail Delivery Group have undertaken various activities as detailed below to mitigate the risk and educate drivers on both the Track Worker Safety programme and the swept path of their train.

One specific example includes RSSB in collaboration with Rail Delivery Group and Network Rail will be producing edition 71 of RED published in June 2025. The video provides drivers, amongst other operational roles, understanding of the Track Worker Safety (TWS) programme and how this changed the position of track workers in relation to the train. It was highlighted at the OSF, that when the TWS programme was first introduced Train Operators and subsequently drivers were not briefed on the programme and what this meant in relation to the position of a track

worker in relation to a train; RED 71 addresses this gap. Giving both track workers and train drivers a better understanding of the swept path of the train and associated dangers.

This is in addition to the RSSB research project (T1273) Optimising Drivers' use of audible warnings published in August 2023. This project provided recommendations on how to optimise and simplify requirements for the use of the train horn. The project made recommendation into the optimal use of the train horn and the Rule Book (Modules GERT8000-TW1, GERT8000-OTM, GERT8000-SS2, GERT8000-TW5, GERT8000-TW7 and GERT8000-TW8) which was carried through to a wider rule book update in September 2024 based on the research recommendations.

Previously reported to RAIB

Recommendation 2

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ORR decision

1. RDG is planning to address the recommendation by developing a briefing for drivers that included information and guidance on the swept envelope of a train. The briefing will also cover changes to track worker methods of work and what that may mean for drivers.
2. After reviewing the information provided ORR has concluded that, in accordance with the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005, RDG has:
 - Taken the recommendation into consideration; and
 - is taking action to close it

Status: Open.

Information in support of ORR decision

3. On 28 October 2022 the Rail Delivery Group provided the following initial response:

In July 2022, Rail Partners was split out from Rail Delivery Group (RDG) in preparation for the move of RDG into Great British Railways. Rail Partners has now taken on the role for advocacy and as trade body for Train Operators; and has taken on a number of the activities previously overseen and driven by RDG. These include the running of Operations Executive (formerly Operations Council) and Engineering Executive (formerly Engineering Council). Rail Delivery Group and Rail Partners will work together to close out open actions allocated to Rail Delivery Group prior to the split, and work with RAIB to identify which party would be the right one to allocate actions to, to give the best outcome for future recommendations.

Recommendation 2 of the Surbiton incident report was discussed at Operations Standards Forum on 14th July 2022 – a group which has moved from RDG to be run

by Rail Partners. The group is comprised of key Operations Standards and Safety leads from across the Train Operator community, with representation from Rail Partners, Rail Delivery Group and Rail Safety & Standards Board (RSSB).

The discussion centred around:

- the onus sitting with the individual working on or near the line to be in a position of safety and to identify this to drivers of approaching/passing trains, rather than the driver of the train having to make this assessment.
- the ability of a driver to identify whether the track-worker was perceived to be within a position of safety when at speed is likely to be limited. However, there was agreement that a briefing for drivers that included some information of the swept-envelope of the train would be useful way forwards, alongside some briefing on Network Rail's changes to the way track workers work on the railway.

Since the incident at Margam in July 2019, Network Rail has made changes to the way in which staff work on the line and are protected through the Track Worker Safety Programme. Network Rail has since advised that the number of 'near misses' reported has increased. However, there is belief that many of these are not 'true' near-misses, but drivers reporting staff working safely under the updated arrangements, with staff found by Network Rail to be working in a safe manner. There has not been a formal briefing to Train Operators, nor specifically drivers, on the Track Worker Safety Programme and subsequent move away from lookout working. It's proposed that as part of the recommendation, that a briefing on the outputs of the Network Rail Trackworker Safety Programme is developed and delivered to drivers, including the move away from lookout working and how this presents itself to drivers.

The intention of Rail Delivery Group, in collaboration with Rail Partners and RSSB, is to respond to the recommendation by developing a briefing for drivers which:

- includes information and guidance on the swept-envelope of the train,
- informs and updates on broader changes to track-worker methods of work, and the changes that drivers may see,
- advises/reminds train drivers of the necessary operational responses when they believe track workers are at risk of being struck.
- may also include support via other mediums, such as the use of Driving Simulators and / or other exercising.

This work will be overseen by the Rail Partners' Operations Standards Forum and should be ready for distribution in the first-half of 2023. Network Rail's Trackworker Safety Programme will also be engaged in the development of the briefing material. Additionally, a request has also been made via Rail Partners to RSSB to utilise learnings from this incident as a subject of a future RED video.

We believe that this is the best approach to the recommendation in getting the most value and providing the most effective outcome for the industry.