

Prosecution



Summary

On the morning of 31 December 2015, the driver of a passenger train, travelling at approximately 115mph to 121mph along the West Coast Main Line, experienced the feeling of an irregularity (“dip and lean”) in the motion of the train as it passed over Lamington Viaduct, South Lanarkshire. Noticing the higher than usual water level of the River Clyde, over which Lamington Viaduct carries the West Coast Main Line, the driver reported the occurrence to the signaller. The incident followed a long period of heavy rainfall.

Local Network Rail maintenance staff arrived to discover that a section of one of the viaduct’s supporting piers, which stands in the river channel, was missing, and the pier had begun to crack. Train movements across the viaduct were immediately suspended. Between the driver’s report to the signaller and the closure of the line, a number of passenger trains passed across the viaduct, the last of which at a speed of approximately 108mph.

Further examination by divers revealed that the piers had suffered from significant scouring (“scour”), such that a significant amount of foundation material had been washed away by the river.

Company

Network Rail Infrastructure Limited

Breaches involved

1. Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 Section 3(1)

Date(s) of offence

On and before 31 December 2015

Plea

Guilty

Result

Sheriff imposed fine

Court

Lanark Sheriff Court

Sentencing date

18 November 2020

Penalty

£10 000 (reduced from £15 000)

Costs

Not awarded in prosecutions in Scotland

Location of offence

Address:

Lamington Viaduct (Underline Bridge 030/332, WCM1 63 miles 1452 yards), which carries the West Coast Main Line across the River Clyde, approximately 1.75m south west of the village of Lamington, South Lanarkshire.

ORR details

ORR Team: Scotland Region Health and Safety Team

ORR Directorate: Railway Safety Directorate