

Safety Alert

A serious incident has taken place



Unsafe access into machinery

Scope: **Network Rail line managers, safety professionals and accredited contractors**

Ref: NRX21-04

Date: 02/03/2021

Location: Crewe Operating Base

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Image shows the operative working inside the BCS system.

Overview

A potential fatality could have occurred on 22nd February 2021 when an operative was observed inside a Ballast Cleaning System on track machine (OTM) at Crewe Operating Base.

Initial reports suggest that there was a signed permit to work in place for the activity; this may be found to be inadequate as the operative did not have the suitable competence to work on the equipment and the permit did not provide the level of protection for the activity.

Following the event, all work in Crewe Operating Base was stood down and an investigation started. All staff in management and supervisory grades participated in stand down briefings within 24 hours of the event and 1-2-1 discussions were held with all Maintenance Managers/Supervisors to determine risks at other sites. A level 3 investigation is now underway.

With immediate effect, no staff are permitted to undertake maintenance activities on or near Network Rail maintained OTMs unless they have a base level of competence around machinery isolations (RVM/01) or direct supervision in place.

Discussion Points

- Permits should specify the activity being undertaken, the people involved and be for a defined time frame. Do your permits reflect all the activities being undertaken, and has anything changed since these have been issued? Have you been permitted to access machinery by a responsible person in charge?
- Are all staff/contractors that require supervision being adequately supervised? Do you know where they are and what they are doing?
- How do you know whether activities have the correct protection and isolations in place? Is the method of work suitable for the activity?
- Can your activity impact or be affected by others working around you? If so, how are risks managed?

Immediate Actions Required

- Brief the content of this safety alert to all relevant staff and contractors so that everyone understands the actions required.
- Walk through your safe systems of work and permits used with a 'buddy' to take a fresh look at your controls. Do they reflect the activity and control the risk? Are they suitable and what risks can be eliminated or reduced?
- Confirm with everyone that they understand and are satisfied with the controls, including who is the responsible person before work starts.