

Line Block Irregularity on Core High Output Work Site

Core works had been planned for 4 consecutive nights at a location on the ECML. This plan required a mileage change for the booked protection on the 4th night.

Because of an OHL problem the staff were re-deployed to a different job for the first 3 nights.

As a result of incomplete communication, the Protection Controller (PC) was at the wrong physical location on the 4th night of the job. He had been given the WON for the work item for that night which listed the 'disruptive' line blocks but it didn't give details of the associated protecting signals.

When the site management became aware that he wasn't at the Signalbox they gave him details over the telephone of a 'non-disruptive' line block for a task towards the end of the shift. This block was not listed in the WON because it had been sent via and approved by the GZAC so it therefore contained details of the associated protecting signals and mileages.

However, this block was for the first 3 nights work and didn't adequately cover the mileage of the work on the 4th night. The PC took several line blocks using this information and advised the relevant COSS's.

No confirmation was sought or obtained between the PC and COSS's, as to whether these line blocks were appropriate for the work site.

After being told that a line block had been granted, some staff moved from the line under possession towards what they assumed was a line on which no trains were running, however, the line blocks being taken were actually for signals in rear of the work site and a train that had cleared the rear section line block area was now approaching the work site.

Fortunately, because the line was protected by a 20mph TSR the staff could see the train approaching at slow speed, they moved back into a position of safety, well before the train passed.

The PC was stood down for 'For Cause' Alcohol and Drugs testing. An experienced and competent member of the staff on site took over the PC duties.

Action to be Taken:

The Investigation is on-going, but has identified at this stage,;

- About 2 weeks ago LNE Route changed their policy on Line Blockage applications such that Blocks appearing in the WON are not be authorised via the normal GZAC process. As such, the agreed mileage and blocking points / signals are no longer detailed in any confirmation documentation from Network Rail.

Action: Planning teams to be aware of this and ensure that appropriate details are provided to the PC in such circumstances. The problem has been escalated to Network Rail for review.

- SSoW documents are not being consistently provided to protection staff for acceptance a shift in advance.

Action: Production Managers and SSoW Planners are asked to check that their process to do and monitor this is robust.

See next page also for additional actions

Safety Alert

Action to be Taken:

- The PC was experienced but it was his first shift on a large complex High Output renewal site and his briefing wasn't as good as it should have been.

Action: Site and Resource Managers should ensure that they understand and manage the profile of staff selected to do PC duties.

- When it became known that the PC was in the wrong location and did not have the necessary paperwork, the opportunity was missed to re-evaluate the arrangements and re-allocate the task to a competent person on the site.

Action: Works & Duty Managers are reminded to consider and review all available options before proceeding.

- The PC failed to confirm that the Line Block arrangements were appropriate.

Action: PCs are reminded that;

You must confirm with the COSS that the line block is appropriate for the protection that is being arranged. If you don't have the correct documentation, **DO-NOT** carry out the task.



Always have a valid safe system of work in place before going on or near the line.

**Please Display on Noticeboards and Brief Out Within
2 Working Days**