

Environment Alert

An environmental incident has taken place



Morlais Junction derailment and fire

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

Ref: NREB20-07

Date: 17/09/2020

Location: Morlais Junction, Wales

Contact: [Sustainable Development Team](#)



Overview

A significant derailment occurred on Wednesday 26th August at Morlais Junction, Llangennech with a large fire and a CAT 1 Environmental incident ensuing. The Freight train derailed carrying substantial quantities of dangerous goods (diesel and gas-oil) in a location that is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). As a result of the derailment several wagons began to leak and caught on fire impacting air quality in the local area. To date the totality of the spill is unknown but is estimated that approximately 270,000 litres of diesel and gas-oil have escaped into the surrounding environment.

Initial efforts to contain the diesel at the source were limited by the fire and prevention of access. The priority at the time was to extinguish the fire, however some mitigation was put in place, at a safe distance at the scene to try and minimise the release of diesel into the Loughor Estuary.

This is a very significant spill of diesel and gas-oil which has the potential to have serious, major, persistent and extensive impacts on the local environment and has therefore been classified as a category 1 environmental incident.

A level three industry investigation, led by Network Rail is underway to determine the causes of the incident. A Safety Bulletin will be issued when more information is known.

Learning points

Please always consider the potential for diesel escape following a derailment and the potential environmental impact that may occur in the immediacy of an incident. In the event of a derailment, if you suspect diesel may be leaking, Route Operational Control should be informed and an Emergency Response Contractor should be called immediately to assess the situation and contain the spill.

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