

Collision at Burgess Drove user worked level crossing

News story

Preliminary examination into a collision at Burgess Drove user worked crossing, near Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire, 9 August 2021.



Forward facing CCTV image showing position of the mobility scooter and user as the train approached (courtesy of Abellio Greater Anglia)

At around 14:33 hrs on 9 August 2021, a train operated by Greater Anglia passed over the level crossing at Burgess Drove, near Waterbeach, and struck the rear part of a mobility scooter which was inside the crossing area, adjacent to the down side gate. The mobility scooter user was near to the scooter when the collision occurred, but was uninjured. The scooter sustained minor damage.

RAIB was notified of the collision by Network Rail and gathered evidence from the railway industry to carry out a preliminary examination into the circumstances of the accident. RAIB has concluded that the accident occurred because the mobility scooter user was not able to complete their crossing of the railway in the time available between the beginning of the warnings of the train's approach, provided by a red light and an audible alarm at the crossing, and the arrival of the train. The RAIB has estimated that, for reasons explained below, the user would have needed approximately 100 seconds from starting to open the first gate until fully closing the second. However, the warning of an approaching train would occur only approximately 40 seconds before its arrival at the crossing.

RAIB found that user at Burgess Drove was unlikely to have been physically fit enough to make the four separate crossings on foot required to operate the user worked crossing in the way required of a vehicular user and this was the likely reason for them using the crossing in the same manner as a pedestrian. This would have seen them first opening the approach gate, moving the scooter forwards, closing this first gate and then moving forwards over

the crossing to the exit gate. After opening the exit gate, they would move forwards until clear of the crossing. The RAIB estimates this would have taken approximately 100 seconds, after which the user would have closed the exit gate behind them.

RAIB has reviewed the findings of its preliminary examination and has decided not to carry out any further investigation into the accident. RAIB previously investigated a an accident at Alice Holt level crossing on 5 October 2016 ([RAIB report 14/2017](#)). This investigation led to a recommendation, addressed to Network Rail, seeking improvements to the guidance given to level crossing managers so that they could better assess the risk to vulnerable users, including mobility scooter users, at level crossings which rely entirely on users looking and listening for trains. As the user worked crossing at Burgess Drove is fitted with red lights and an audible warning showing when it is unsafe to cross, it is not covered by this recommendation. RAIB has therefore written to Network Rail encouraging it to extend the intent of this recommendation to all user worked level crossings which the public are entitled to use. This letter has been copied to the Office of Rail and Road, the safety authority for the mainline railway in Great Britain.

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