

[News story: Runaway trolley on the East Lancashire Railway](#)

At around 11:15 hours on Thursday 15 March 2018, a group of track workers were working in a possession on the East Lancashire Railway north of Ramsbottom station. They were using an un-braked trolley to transport ballast over the prevailing gradient in that area, which is between 1:264 and 1:140. In order to prevent it running away while being loaded, pieces of ballast were used as improvised scotches.

After being loaded with approximately 0.5 tonnes of ballast, the improvised scotches were removed and three members of the team began to move the trolley southwards, downhill towards Ramsbottom station. Shortly after this the trolley began to run away and the track workers were unable to stop it.

The trolley continued south until the level crossing immediately north of the station. The wooden gates at the crossing were closed across the railway allowing road traffic to pass. The trolley struck the gates and derailed, damaging and displacing one of the gates into the road and spilling ballast onto the road. Although the road was open to traffic no one was injured.

The RAIB's investigation will determine the sequence of events and include consideration of:

- the planning of the work and actions of those involved
- the training and competence of those involved
- the management of the condition and use of trolleys on the railway
- any underlying management factors

Our investigation is independent of any investigation by the railway industry, or by the industry's regulator, the [Office of Rail and Road](#).

We will publish our findings, including any recommendations to improve safety, at the conclusion of our investigation. This report will be available on our website.

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