

[Press release: Report 13/2018: Near miss with track workers at Pelaw North Junction](#)

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Summary

At around 10:46 hrs on 21 February 2018, two track workers narrowly avoided being struck by a Tyne and Wear Metro train at Pelaw North Junction. The train was travelling at around 65km/h at the time. The track workers managed to move clear of the train two seconds before the train passed them. Neither was injured.

The incident occurred because the track workers were unaware of the train approaching on the line which they were on. A second train, on an adjacent line, had blocked their view of the approaching train. Although two trains passing each other in such a manner is a regular event at Pelaw North Junction, the system of work which had been set up by the track workers did not take the blocking of a lookout's view of one train by another into account. The RAIB found that Nexus Rail's procedures did not assist with the creation of an effective safe system of work. Additionally, there was a non-compliance with the rule book relating to the lookout not providing a warning when the sighting of trains became obscured.

Recommendations

As a result of its investigation, the RAIB has made five recommendations to Nexus Rail. These cover:

- identifying locations on the Tyne and Wear Metro network where multiple lookouts are necessary to establish a safe system of work and providing this information to relevant staff
- improving the information available to track workers regarding hazards on the Tyne and Wear Metro network
- improving the quality of on-site risk assessments carried out
- supporting newly qualified safety critical track staff as they gain experience in making safe decisions
- clarifying and strengthening the process that Nexus Rail use to manage staff on prescription medication.

The RAIB has also identified three learning points. One is a reminder to all

track workers on the Tyne and Wear Metro of the rule book requirement to stand in a position of safety when a train is passing on another line. The second reminds lookouts to constantly review their sighting of trains and provide a warning to track workers if sighting is lost for any reason. The third advises duty holders of the importance of reviewing the circumstances of near-miss incidents promptly, so that perishable evidence is secured and, where appropriate, the RAIB and ORR are notified in a timely manner.

Notes to editors

1. The sole purpose of RAIB investigations is to prevent future accidents and incidents and improve railway safety. RAIB does not establish blame, liability or carry out prosecutions.
2. RAIB operates, as far as possible, in an open and transparent manner. While our investigations are completely independent of the railway industry, we do maintain close liaison with railway companies and if we discover matters that may affect the safety of the railway, we make sure that information about them is circulated to the right people as soon as possible, and certainly long before publication of our final report.
3. For media enquiries, please call 01932 440015.

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