

[Press release: Report 13/2017: Fatal collision at Woodbourn Road, Sheffield](#)

Summary

At 10:02 hrs on 22 December 2016, a pedestrian, who had just got off an inbound tram at Woodbourn Road tram stop, was struck and fatally injured by an outbound tram travelling from Sheffield city centre towards Meadowhall. The pedestrian was using the crossing at the northern end of the tram stop at the time. The crossing, which runs over both tracks, provides a pathway between the inbound platform and Woodbourn Road. No one was waiting at the outbound platform and no one on board the outbound tram had requested that it stop, so it was travelling non-stop through the platform at around 13 mph (21 km/h).

The tram driver did not see the pedestrian approaching the crossing. Until shortly before the collision, the tram driver's attention was focused on looking in the tram's mirrors and not on looking ahead. Consequently, the driver did not see the pedestrian in time to take action to prevent the accident. Other possible factors that might have contributed to the accident were that the driver was wearing sunglasses, which might have reduced the visibility of the pedestrian who was in a shaded area, and the driver's concentration level might have been reduced by that stage of the journey. The pedestrian was seemingly unaware that the tram was approaching the crossing and the tram did not give an audible warning to indicate that it was passing non-stop through the tram stop. An underlying cause was that Stagecoach Supertram had not assessed the risk of trams in service running non-stop through tram stops when it first introduced the system of request stops around 1999. The RAIB also found inconsistencies between the training and assessments for new tram drivers when making non-stop movements through tram stops and the operational standards that drivers are required to follow for such movements.

Since the accident, Stagecoach Supertram has reported it has taken action to mandate audible warnings for all non-stop movements through tram stops and to reduce driver distraction due to looking in mirrors. It has also updated its risk assessment to include trams in service running non-stop through tram stops and implemented measures to reduce the risk of collisions with pedestrians. These reported actions address factors which otherwise would have resulted in RAIB recommendations.

Recommendations

The RAIB has made two recommendations. One recommendation is addressed to Stagecoach Supertram and relates to the continuance of its work to review its training material against its operational standards so that they are made consistent. The second recommendation is addressed to UK tram operators, in conjunction with UK Tram Limited, and relates to setting up an industry working group to monitor the development and application of new pedestrian

detection technology to alert drivers to potential collisions with pedestrians.

The RAIB has also identified three learning points. The first highlights the importance of tram operators actively assessing and managing the additional risk to users of foot crossings associated with trams making non-stop movements through tram stops. The second reminds tram drivers to only use driving mirrors for essential tasks related to the safe operation of the tram during non-stop movements through tram stops. The third is for tram drivers about understanding how sunglasses can affect their vision when passing from sunlit to shaded areas, particularly during the winter months when the sun is low.

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.

Newsdate: 27 September 2017

PDF, 8.42MB, 43 pages

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