

Report 09/2022: Collision between road-rail vehicles near Ramsden Bellhouse

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Summary

On 2 May 2021, just before 07:00 hrs, two road-rail vehicles (RRVs) collided while travelling on the same track towards Wickford station from a location of work near Ramsden Bellhouse, Essex. The leading vehicle, a mobile elevating work platform (MEWP), was stationary at the time of the collision and was hit from behind at around 7.5 mph (12 km/h) by a road-rail machine, configured as a crane. The MEWP operator suffered life-changing injuries due to the collision.

Around 10 seconds before the collision, the MEWP operator had stopped to stow away a tool which was loose in the personnel basket of his machine. Around the same time, the operator of the crane became dazzled by the rising sun ahead. The crane operator turned to look out of the side window to relieve his eyes but did not apply the brakes of the crane when he did so, resulting in the collision with the MEWP.

Before the collision, the crane operator had allowed the gap between the crane and the MEWP to reduce so that, when the MEWP stopped, it was only about 30 metres. Network Rail standards require operators to maintain a minimum separation distance of 100 metres when travelling in convoy with other vehicles. The shortened separation distance in this case reduced the time that the crane operator had to observe and react to the obstruction ahead.

Fatigue was a possible factor in this accident, as the crane operator had not taken advantage of the opportunity to rest before the nightshift at a hotel provided by his employers. He had also not declared his actual travel time when providing his journey details at the site access control point.

A possible underlying factor was the lack of clarity in the role of machine controllers during travelling movements. This may have contributed to a lack

of warning of the impending collision from the crane controller, who was riding in the cab with the crane operator.

A similar collision occurred at Wellingborough on 15 August 2019. The industry's investigation into that accident found that the machine operators involved had been regularly ignoring the need to maintain an adequate separation between vehicles. Although action was taken to modify behaviours, site inspection procedures were not revised to assure compliance and RAIB found that the plan for the work being undertaken on 1 to 2 May 2021 did not explicitly cover the need for suitable distances to be maintained. Not applying learning from this previous accident is also a possible underlying factor.

Recommendations

RAIB has made three recommendations. Two of these are addressed to Network Rail and include the need to clarify the role of a machine controller when they are travelling with their vehicle, as well as the need to continue the development of obstacle detection for road-rail vehicles. A third recommendation is made to SPL Powerlines UK and Readypower Rail Services relating to the application of learning from previous accidents and incidents.

RAIB has also identified four learning points. These alert operators to the need for bringing vehicles to a stand when forward vision is lost, and the importance of judging and observing the correct safe distance between moving vehicles. It is also important that staff are fit and appropriately prepared when reporting for duty and comply with all road-rail vehicle operating instructions.

Andrew Hall, Chief Inspector of Rail Accidents said:

Sadly, this readily-avoided accident led to a member of railway staff sustaining life changing injuries.

Bright sunlight can temporarily dazzle or obscure vision. It is important that those driving vehicles by line of sight, slow sufficiently or stop if visibility becomes poor. Even momentary dazzling can lead to an unsafe situation rapidly developing.

When operating rail-road machines on the railway it is essential to maintain the defined safe distance of 100 metres with other moving vehicles. This accident involved differential speeds dangerously reducing the distance between the vehicles from 90 metres to approximately 30 metres during the journey. Recognising the true distances involved, as well as the potential consequence of road-rail vehicles travelling in convoy at different speeds, is vital to maintaining safe distances between vehicles.

What is particularly frustrating about this accident, is that lessons from a previous accident involving the same contractor had not been learned. Both accidents shared similar factors including a

lack of adequate separation between vehicles, a loss of attention and avoiding action not being taken. Not applying these lessons to improve planning of work or the site assurance processes was an opportunity missed to avoid a collision with severe consequences.

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: 1 September 2022

[Folic acid added to flour to prevent brain and spinal conditions in foetuses](#)

- Defra launches UK-wide consultation on the Bread and Flour Regulations on the amount of folic acid to be added to flour
- Under the government's proposals, pregnancies affected by neural tube defects could fall by more than a fifth

The number of pregnancies affected by life-threatening issues such as spina bifida could fall by more than a fifth as the government moves one step closer to actively adding folic acid to non-wholemeal flour.

Following a consultation with industry and stakeholders on whether to add folic acid to non-wholemeal flour, a public health policy which has already been successful in Australia, New Zealand and Canada, today the government is consulting on its proposal to add 250 micrograms of folic acid per 100 grams of flour.

The proposal on the amount of folic acid to be added to flour is part of the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) consultation on the Bread and Flour Regulations, which aims to ensure the regulations are consistent with other food standards legislation.

Neural tube defects are a rare developmental condition which occurs very early in pregnancy and affects around 1,000 pregnancies each year in the UK. This occurs when the brain, spine, or spinal cord do not develop properly in the womb and can cause life-threatening health issues.

Women are advised to take a daily 400-microgram folic acid supplement before conceiving and up to the 12th week of pregnancy as it reduces the risk of neural tube defects affected pregnancies. However, as pregnancies may be unplanned or women in the first few weeks of pregnancy may not know they are pregnant, many women may be unaware of this recommendation.

Adding folic acid will mean foods made with flour, such as bread, will actively help avoid around 200 neural tube defects each year – around 20% of the annual UK total.

Defra Food Minister Victoria Prentis said:

It is vital that we consult on this issue to understand views on all of our proposed amendments to bread and flour regulations.

Folic acid fortification is an example of how we can ensure the public receive the nutrition we require through everyday food products.

The government's Bread and Flour Regulations consultation proposes adding 250 micrograms of folic acid per 100 grams of non-wholemeal flour.

Minister for Public Health Maggie Throup said:

Neural tube defects can have a devastating impact on life expectancy and quality of life.

This simple step will ensure more women who might be pregnant, or who are trying to conceive, will have increased intakes of folic acid, leading to a large reduction in the number of fetuses affected by NTDs each year.

I want to encourage anyone with an interest in this issue to participate in the consultation and help us deliver life-saving changes.

The proposal forms part of a UK-wide consultation on the Bread and Flour Regulations which aims to support UK industry, help lead to improved public health outcomes, assist enforcement authorities and protect UK consumers. It

will ensure the regulations are consistent with other food standards legislation, covering the specifications of vitamins and minerals added to foods.

The consultation opens on Thursday 1 September and closes on Wednesday 23 November. It is open to everyone and is available here:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/food-compositional-standards/bread-and-flour-consultation-2022>

Cefnogi recriwtio mwy diogel yn y sector blynyddoedd cynnar ac addysg

News story

Mae ymgyrch 'Gwneud Recriwtio'n Fwy Diogel' Y Gwasanaeth Datgelu a Gwahardd yn hyrwyddo'r cymorth sydd ar gael gan ein gwasanaeth Allgymorth Rhanbarthol.



Mae'r Gwasanaeth Datgelu a Gwahardd (Disclosure and Barring Service – DBS) wedi lansio cam diweddaraf yr ymgyrch 'Gwneud Recriwtio'n Fwy Diogel'. Anelir y cam yma o'r ymgyrch at y sector blynyddoedd cynnar ac addysg ac mae'n amlygu'r ystod o gyngor am ddim a hyfforddiant sydd ar gael i sefydliadau o bob maint. Mae cyngor a hyfforddiant yn amrywio o gynnwys gwiriadau Datgelu a Gwahardd a chymhwysedd, i'r ddyletswydd gyfreithiol i wneud atgyfeiriad i wahardd, a sut i wneud atgyfeiriad.

Mae'r Gwasanaeth wedi ymuno gyda sefydliadau partner yn y blynyddoedd cynnar ac addysg sydd wedi elwa o gymorth y DBS yn flaenorol, i helpu hyrwyddo'r ymgyrch i gyflogwyr eraill yn y sector. Mae partneriaid yn cynnwys [Blynyddoedd Cynnar Cymru](#), [PACEY – y Gymdeithas Broffesiynol ar gyfer Gofal Plant a'r Blynyddoedd Cynnar](#), [Hyfforddiant Estio](#) ac [EPM](#).

Lansiwyd yr ymgyrch 'Gwneud Recriwtio'n Fwy Diogel' yn wreiddiol ym mis Mehefin 2022 ac mae wedi targedu'r sectorau elusennol a ffydd yn flaenorol.

Dyweddodd Eric Robinson, Prif Weithredwr y Gwasanaeth Datgelu a Gwahardd:

Mae'r Gwasanaeth Datgelu a Gwahardd yn cyflawni rôl hanfodol wrth helpu i amddiffyn plant, pobl ifanc ac oedolion agored i niwed drwy gefnogi cyflogwyr i wneud penderfyniadau recriwtio mwy diogel. Mae'n bleser gennym lansio ein hymgyrch newydd gyda'r sector blynyddoedd cynnar ac addysg i dynnu sylw at yr hyfforddiant a chynghor am ddim y gallwn eu darparu i sefydliadau drwy ein gwasanaeth Allgymorth Rhanbarthol.

Mae'r gwasanaeth hwn yn darparu un pwynt cyswllt i sefydliadau ar gyfer pob ymholiad a chwestiwn yn ymwneud â'r DBS, yn ogystal â'r cyfle i gael mynediad at hyfforddiant DBS sydd wedi'i deilwra ar gyfer eu staff a'u gwirfoddolwyr. Mae'r tîm hefyd yn coladu adborth er mwyn sicrhau y gellir gwneud gwelliannau yn y dyfodol i wasanaethau a phrosesau'r DBS.

Dysgwch fwy am yr ymgyrch ar gyfryngau cymdeithasol drwy chwilio am #DBSMakingRecruitmentSafer.

Gellir dod o hyd i fwy o wybodaeth am wasanaeth Allgymorth Rhanbarthol y DBS yn ein [canllawiau allgymorth](#).

Published 1 September 2022

[Government extends Horizon Europe financial safety net](#)

Press release

The government has announced an extension to the financial support provided to Horizon Europe applicants, originally launched in November 2021.



- Government extends Horizon Europe guarantee scheme, protecting funding for UK researchers, businesses, and innovators
- association to EU programmes remains the UK's preference, with the

government's priority to maintain support for the UK's research and development sector during ongoing period of uncertainty

- guarantee will now be in place to cover all Horizon Europe calls that close on or before 31 December 2022

Today (1 September 2022), the government has announced an extension to the financial support provided to Horizon Europe applicants, originally launched in November 2021. The extension will ensure that eligible, successful UK applicants will continue to be guaranteed funding, supporting them to continue their important work in research and innovation.

The guarantee will now be in place to cover all Horizon Europe calls that close on or before 31 December 2022, with the majority of grant signature dates expected before the end of August 2023. This extension will protect and support the UK sector during the ongoing delays while we continue to encourage the EU to formalise UK association, including through the recently launched consultation process.

Eligible, successful applicants will receive the full value of their funding at their UK host institution for the lifetime of the grant. Successful awardees will be able to remain in the UK to receive this funding, which will provide reassurance for future collaborations, and support UK researchers whether association is confirmed, or otherwise.

The UK cannot wait indefinitely for association to EU Programmes, and in parallel to these measures, we continue to develop plans for a bold and ambitious package of alternatives. The government released [a publication](#) on 20 July setting out further detail on these plans.

Details regarding the scope and terms of the extension are available on the [UKRI website](#).

Published 1 September 2022

[Civil news: early billing for asylum matters](#)

News story

Changes are being made to the 2018 Standard Civil Contract effective from 1 September 2022 to allow early billing for asylum matters.



Providers will be able to claim the standard fee for asylum matters from 1 September 2022 before the case has concluded.

We are making this possible through changes to the immigration and asylum specification in the 2018 Standard Civil Contract.

The changes follow consultations with your representative bodies. This will only apply to work carried out under the asylum standard fee scheme and which meets the criteria set out in the specification.

Where can I find out more?

Full details of the contract amendments can be found on the Standard Civil Contract 2018 page on GOV.UK.

Further information

[Standard civil contract 2018](#) – for table of amendments and immigration and asylum category specific rules

[Guidance for reporting controlled work and controlled work matters](#) – for updated guidance on how to claim for work completed under the new clauses

[Legal aid guidance](#) – for practical guidance relating to early billing for asylum matters

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