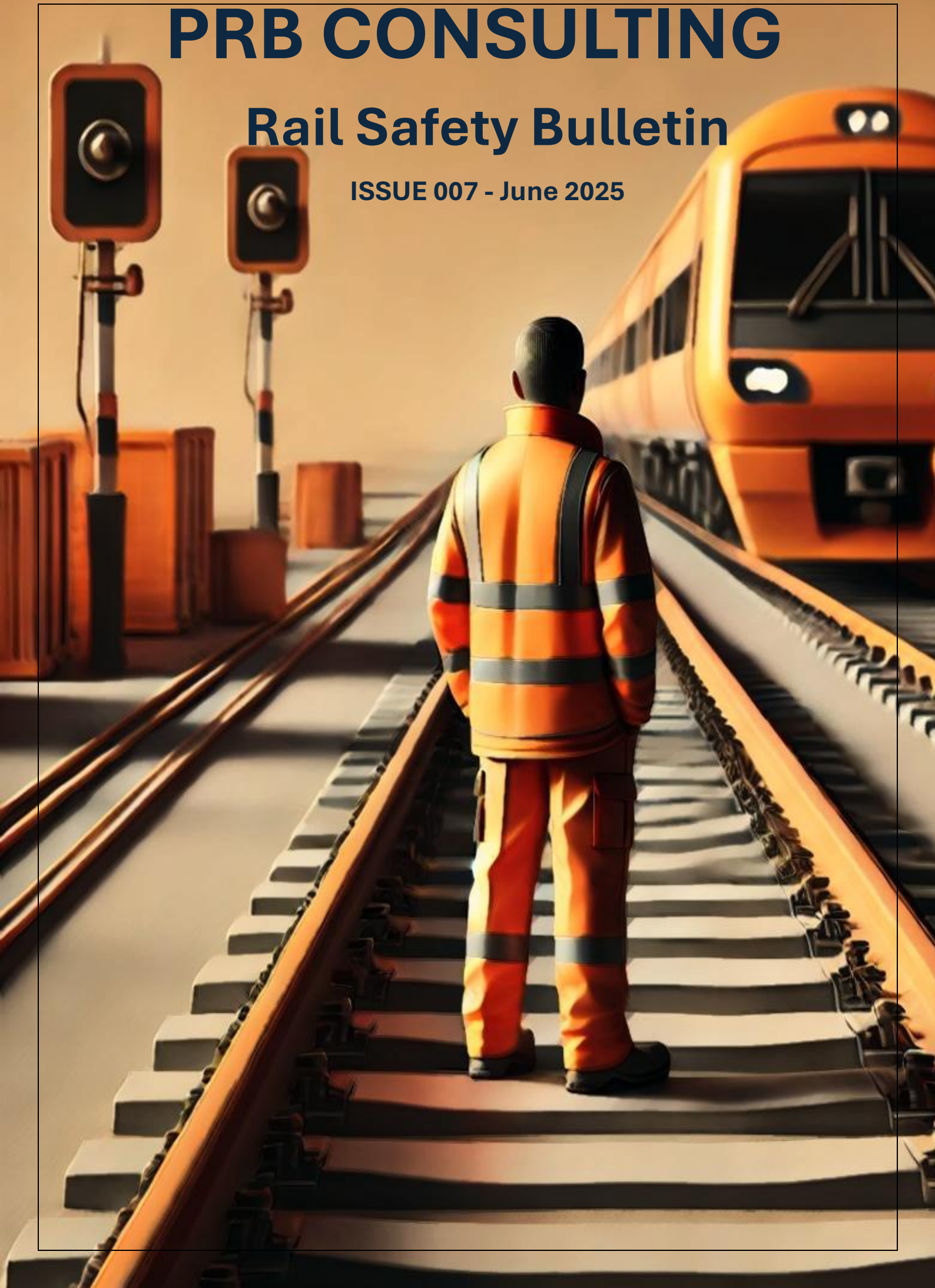


# PRB CONSULTING

## Rail Safety Bulletin

ISSUE 007 - June 2025



## **Contents**

<b>NRL25-02 – Derailment of Freight Train at Audenshaw .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Staff Fatigue Awareness .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>CCTV Footage Shows Public Taking Risks at Pedestrian Level Crossing .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Would you like to Advertise with Us! .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>QUIZ TIME .....</b>	<b>9</b>

# NRL25-02 – Derailment of Freight Train at Audenshaw

## Overview

At around 11:25 on 6 September 2024, a freight train travelling between Peak Forest and Salford derailed as it passed over Sidmouth Street bridge in Audenshaw, Manchester.

The train was made up of 2 class 66 locomotives and 24 wagons fully loaded with aggregate. The 2 locomotives and the leading 10 wagons passed safely over the bridge, but the following 9 wagons derailed, with the remaining wagons coming to a stand on the bridge itself.



No injuries were caused as a result of the derailment, but substantial damage was caused to railway infrastructure and some of the wagons.

The track over Sidmouth Street underbridge No. 3 is supported by a Longitudinal Timber Bearer System (LBS) and has a sub 800m radius curve.

Investigations to date suggest that the derailment was caused by gauge spread of the track which occurred when the baseplate chair screws sheared and broke.

## Underlying Causes

- The chair screws in the baseplates were the wrong type. For hardwood timbers they should have been high tensile screws (marked as HT) as per NR/L2/TRK/3038.
- The chair screws used were too short for the depth of packing between the baseplate and the timbers. Screws marked AS had been fitted which are 160mm long (6 5/16 inch). They should have been LSA screws as these are 206mm long (8 3/8 inch),
- There was no signed Longitudinal Bearer Management Plan in place – this should have been produced, approved and signed by both Track and Structures engineers as per TEF3279.
- Ellipse was not being used as required by NR/L3/MTC/MG0176. Specifically, Ellipse had not been populated to record previous incidents when screws had sheared and been replaced. Recording in Ellipse is vital so that similar or repeat incidents can be identified to allow any 'trends' to be identified and mitigated.
- Track geometry trace reviews had not been undertaken in accordance with NR/L2/TRK/001 mod 11.
- There had been several staffing changes in the maintenance team in the months prior to the derailment and the handover of high-risk assets between TMEs had not been sufficiently recorded.
- Assurance processes had not picked up the issues above.



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## Key Message

SIN220 “Managing Lateral Forces on Sub 800m Longitudinal Bearer Systems” was issued on 06 December 2024 which requires the inspection of the type of chair screws and depth of packing to ensure any failed, ineffective or non-compliant screws are replaced.

In addition to actioning SIN220, review the implementation and associated assurance of the following controls:

- How effective is your management of longitudinal bearer systems between track and structures engineers including:
  - Do you have Longitudinal Bearer Management Plans (LBMP, TEF3279) for each longitudinal bearer structure that have been approved and signed by both the track and structures Engineers?
  - Where track geometry issues exist on longitudinal bearer systems, have they been discussed with the structures team in a timely manner?
  - When structural issues are identified on longitudinal bearer bridge systems how are they raised and discussed with track engineers in a timely manner?
- Are your inspection regimes at the correct frequency for the longitudinal bearer systems in accordance with NR/L2/TRK/001/mod02 Track inspection and NR/L2/TRK/3038 Longitudinal Bearer Systems – Inspection, Maintenance and Design?
- Are trace reviews being carried out effectively and to the required standard?
- Where inspection staff are regularly replacing components how are these being recorded and reported?
- Is all information recorded on the TEF forms being captured in Ellipse?
- Does your Level 1 Assurance include cradle to grave checks on work orders to ensure that all aspects from work order creation to delivery and close out are being captured fully and accurately.
- Are maintenance managers and engineers effectively reviewing the output of L1 assurance, not just completion rates and how are “not checked on this occasion” answers monitored in MSA?
- How robust are handovers between track maintenance engineers when people change roles?
- How are newly promoted staff supported by competent and experienced mentors through the transition period?



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# Staff Fatigue Awareness



## Why This Matters

Fatigue is more than just feeling tired — it can impair your judgment, slow your reactions, and increase the risk of accidents on and off site.

Recognising and managing fatigue is vital to keeping everyone safe and performing at their best.

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## a. Train Key Personnel on How to Recognise Fatigue

All supervisors, team leaders, and line managers will receive training to spot early signs of fatigue in team members. These may include:

- Slower reaction times or clumsiness
- Repeated yawning or dozing off
- Reduced awareness or confusion
- Mood changes (irritability, low motivation)
- Poor decision-making or forgetfulness

✅ Supervisors will be supported to intervene early and take appropriate actions such as recommending breaks, task changes, or time off where necessary.

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## b. Encourage Self-Reporting

We want you to feel confident and supported if you are experiencing fatigue.

- **Fatigue is not a weakness** — it's a normal human response to excessive workload, stress, or poor rest.
- Reporting fatigue helps prevent accidents and protect your wellbeing.
- Speak to your line manager, safety rep, or use our confidential reporting tool if you're not comfortable raising it face-to-face.



"If you wouldn't drive in your current condition, don't work in it."



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## c. Review Individual Trends

We regularly review shift patterns, travel times, actual hours worked (via systems like Rail-Time or timesheets), and staff feedback to look for signs of chronic fatigue.

Managers will:

- Identify individuals consistently working long hours
- Check for excessive night shifts or shift changes
- Speak privately with individuals if fatigue appears to be building over time



These trends help us plan better shifts and support each individual.

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## d. Recognise that Fatigue Tolerance Varies

We all experience fatigue differently — what's manageable for one person may be overwhelming for another.

- Age, health conditions, stress levels, caring responsibilities, or sleep quality can all affect fatigue.
- We don't expect everyone to have the same energy every day.
- Adjustments can be made — just talk to us.



Our culture is “talk first, judge never” — because the safest teams are the ones that look after each other.



## What You Can Do Today

- Take regular breaks and hydrate
- Report poor sleep or long commutes to your manager
- Support colleagues who show signs of fatigue
- Avoid stimulants (e.g. excessive caffeine) as a long-term fix
- Prioritise rest and recovery between shifts



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# CCTV Footage Shows Public Taking Risks at Pedestrian Level Crossing

[Network Rail](#) has released “shocking” CCTV footage showing the danger of pedestrian distractions at level crossings.

It said the montage footage highlights the potential risks of losing focus near a railway line, from a teenager stood in the middle of a level crossing gazing at their mobile phone, to a pram-pushing couple failing to observe safety barrier alarms.



The release of the footage comes as new research commissioned by Network Rail reveals nearly half of people (47 per cent) admit they’ve made a mistake, such as missing their train or locking themselves out of the house, while being distracted by their phone.

Young people are among the most distracted with 87 per cent of Gen Z and 70 per cent of Millennials admitting these mistakes, compared to just 22 per cent of Boomers.

Mobile phones are a major cause of distractions, impacting young people the most.

The data shows Gen Z are more likely than Boomers to have walked into something or someone (47 per cent v seven per cent), walked in the wrong direction (39 per cent v five per cent), or dropped something (39 per cent v eight per cent) whilst being distracted by their phone.

In a world full of distractions, Network Rail is warning of the more serious consequences of being distracted at level crossings.

Over the past four years, there have been 1,574 recorded near miss incidents involving pedestrians at level crossings. Over that same period, incidents have increased on average by 16 per cent from April to May.

The research also found a concerning lack of caution around level crossings, with over two fifths of people (41 per cent) admitting they are more careful when crossing roads – even at zebra or traffic light crossings – compared to level crossings.

There are 6,000 level crossings in operation across the country and every level crossing is different depending on the surroundings and its usage. Network Rail is urging the public to stay safe when using level crossings by following the advice:



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- Stop, look, and listen. Every crossing is different so always read the signs and follow the instructions.
- Understand warning signs (lights, barriers, alarms) and obey them fully. Always follow instructions at each level crossing completely.
- Check both ways before crossing. If there is a train coming, wait behind the barrier or marked line until it has passed. Remember there may be more than one train, and they may be coming from different directions.
- Cross quickly and safely. Make sure your exit route is clear and do not stop when crossing.
- Incidents on level crossings can be fatal or life changing. Lucy Ruck was only 17 when she lost her leg in a railway incident at Farnborough North level crossing. Thirty years later, she has turned her experience into positive action by successfully campaigning for an accessible footbridge at the same station and highlighting the importance of safety at level crossings to raise awareness and prevent similar accidents.



Lucy said: “The consequences of a split-second decision can be life-altering. I know this all too well from my own accident. I wasn’t being deliberately reckless or rushing, but perhaps because I used the station every day and knew it so well, I’d become a bit complacent.

I went with everyone else without stopping to think for myself. Remember, no appointment or destination is worth risking your life for. Always look carefully and never assume it’s safe to cross. It’s better to be late in this world, than early in the next.”

Thomas Desmond, Operations Director at Network Rail, said: “Level crossings demand your full attention, yet complacency and distraction are putting lives at risk, contributing to hundreds of dangerous near misses annually. Whether it’s glancing at a phone or simply assuming the track is clear, these lapses in concentration can be fatal. We urge everyone to stop, look, listen and obey the signals every single time. Waiting a few minutes is infinitely better than risking everything.”

Gemma Briggs is a Professor of Applied Cognitive Psychology at the Open University and studies the impact of distractions on our daily lives. Professor Briggs commented: “While you may feel able to multitask when using your phone, research shows you can fail to notice important events and hazards which happen right in front of you.

You don’t notice them because your mind is on your phone, and your attention is spread too thinly. This ‘inattention blindness’ is particularly problematic in safety critical situations such as at level crossings. The best course of action is to put your phone away and focus your full attention on crossing safely.”



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✓ **High Engagement – Over 100 UK rail suppliers**

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Have your Banner Advert included in our monthly bulletins and reach over 100UK Rail suppliers

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# QUIZ TIME

There were quite a few correct entries to the Quiz that was set in April 2025 Rail Safety Bulletin

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## The Question

With regard to the near-miss, where was the CCTV footage captured?

*Answer: Ferring, West Sussex*

The first name out of the stationmaster's hat was... Adrian from FM Conway Ltd

**Congratulations Adrian, the M&S Voucher is on its way!!**

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So, this month we have another opportunity to create a winner!

There is a £25 M&S Voucher up for grabs in this, the June Rail Safety Bulletin.

*To be a winner this month, just answer the simple question below;*

## The Question

**Over the past four years how many recorded near miss incidents involving pedestrians has there been at level crossings?**

Answers by email please to [info@prb-consulting.co.uk](mailto:info@prb-consulting.co.uk) to be in with a chance of winning the £25.00 M&S voucher – Put QUIZ in the subject.

Closing Date: 31<sup>st</sup> July 2025



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**RAIL BULLETIN ISSUE 007 – JUNE 2025**

Briefed By:		Briefers Role:	
Briefing Date:		Briefers Signature:	
Sentinel Coordinator:		Sentinel Coordinator Signature:	

**By signing below, I confirm that I have received and understood the briefing material contained within this bulletin.**

[illegible]