

Shared Learning



OLE Head Span Cable Strike

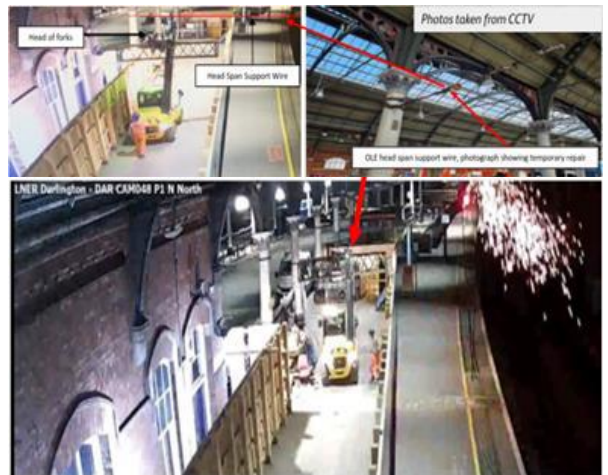
Issued to: Network Rail line managers, safety professionals and accredited contractors

Ref: NRL24-07

Date of issue: 25/11/2024

Location: Darlington Station, Eastern region

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Overview

Following dismantling works at Darlington Station, the site area was being cleared of steel arising during the nightshift. Works were being carried out behind pre-erected 2.4m high timber hoarding on platform 1 that surrounded the whole work site to segregate the work site from the operational platform.

Whilst travelling within the hoarding, the load (3m length of steel) was lifted (boomed) over the hoarding using the telehandler (see photos). The Telehandler's head of the forks contacted the OLE head span support wire and brought the vehicle to a stop. The Plant Marshall checked the tires and then informed the operator that the tires are inflated and therefore couldn't identify any problem. The telehandler driver then continued forward pushing against the OLE head span support wire (see photo) which caused it to snap under the tension and likely came into contact with the live contact wire.

The event caused the adjacent circuit breakers to trip and resulted in 570 delay minutes whilst a temporary repair of the OLE head span was undertaken.

Underlying causes

- Steel arisings were not planned to be raised above the hoarding.
- Steel arising were not cut into manageable sections to remain within the hoarding when transported.
- Change in methodology to transport materials was not risk assessed in accordance with [NR/L3/ELP/29987](#) module 2.
- Site Supervision never corrected or ensured that zoning arrangements and safe working practices were being adhered to throughout the shift.

Key message

- When working in proximity of NR OLE infrastructure (whether deemed live or not), a risk assessment is required to be in place in accordance with [NR/L3/ELP/29987](#) module 2.
- Site walk through with the designers, contractor and site staff must be carried out.
- When changes arise during planned activities, the collaborative consultation process must be revisited to re-view risks and control measures.
- Supervisors and operatives must check and challenge permits that are ambiguous without any control measures being identified or implemented.
- When putting people to work, briefings must be clear and concise with confirmation of understanding asked.
- Capability assessments to be carried out on all operations and personnel involved prior to commencing the task.
- Plant Marshall required to be in a position of safety out 3 meters away from moving plant(s).

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