

Shared Learning

Balfour Beatty
Rail

The Thameslink Programme

Issue Date: 24th August 2016 For further info contact mike.netherton@networkrail.co.uk

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Issue Number: TLP 062 Title: Signal Post Dropped During Lifting Operation

Overview of Event:

On the 9th July, a Railway Systems civil's team were deployed to remove a redundant 2.5m high signal post weighing 225kg which had been installed as a temporary structure at London Bridge Station.

On site, the team discovered that the signal base had been partially cast into a concrete wall built by other contractors. The supervisor temporarily stopped the works and in conjunction with Network Rail it was decided to cut the post and remove the upper portion.

To achieve this, the post was slung using a strop connected to the jib hook of an RRV and the team used a Stihl disc saw to cut the post. As the final part of the post was cut, under tension, it swung towards the RRV and one end of the sling came out releasing the signal post mid-air and it fell to the ground.

The exclusion zone for the lifting activity was inadequate. There were no injuries sustained from the fall and the team then re-stopped the post and lifted it onto a trailer without reassessing the equipment for any damage.

Immediate Cause:

- The signal post fell due to the method of stroping and not being supported vertically whilst being cut

Underlying Causes:

- There was a failure to coordinate designs between the station and railway works
- Pre-works survey was hindered by a temporary boarded walkway covering the signal base
- There was a lack of detail in the lifting method and plan to attach and lift the signal post
- A lack of supervisory control was exerted by the crane controller in the lifting operation

Actions Taken As a Result of Investigation:

- A review of the design integration and survey process when planning work
- Future civil's work to be surveyed, and to include the removal of other temporary works for visibility if required
- Detail within in Task Briefing Sheets and Lifting Plans to be examined and improved
- Competence of supervisory staff too be improved through standard training
- Exclusion zones for similar works to be demarcated with barriers
- All Crane Controllers to be reviewed for length of experience and competence in advance of putting to work

General Key Messages:

- Robust communication and coordination between adjacent works is essential to safe delivery
- When work is re-planned, it should be reviewed by competent team and risk assessed accordingly
- Crane Controllers should be selected on the basis of experience in addition to holding a Sentinel Competence and empowered to act in the role employed

Diagram/ Photo of event:



Cutting Post



Escaping from falling post