

Shared Learning



The Thameslink Programme

Issue Date: 13th Dec 2016 - For further info contact sharon.fink@networkrail.co.uk

Issue Number: TLP064 Title: Fire Alarm Activations at London Bridge Station

Overview of Event:

Two separate fire alarm incidents occurred on 5th & 7th Sept 2016.
One alarm resulted in the station being evacuated, the other in a near evacuation.

5th Sept - failure to adequately communicate to sub contractors the updated changes to the alarm status of detectors in discrete zones which resulted in the testing of a 'live' detector head. The station was evacuated.

7th Sept – failure by the sub contractors to update the records in changes to detection zones. The station was not evacuated.

General Key Messages:

- **Control of Work:** any planned works must have arrangements in place to make sure that there are adequate controls in place to authorise the commencement of works on site, including communication with those in control of the location
- **Drawings:** information being used to plan and execute works on site must be up to date and accurate. Work teams should understand the arrangements in place to obtain up-to-date information / drawings
- **Security:** access to any restricted areas must be reviewed on a regular basis to make sure that they are still effective

Actions Taken As a Result of the Investigations:

- A Fire Alarm [testing and commissioning] procedure has been produced. The WPP & TBS now reflects this.
- Sub Contractor Engineers have been re-briefed on the requirement to book in with the Project, Station Reception and the Integrated Station Control Room (ISCR).
- Costain and Network Rail Project team have develop an electronic permit for work in operational areas with flow chart. This will be used for all works in operational areas.
- Sub Contractors have produced a flow chart to reflect the Permit to Work and the procedure. This has been detailed in the new Fire Alarm procedure. The Sub Contractor will undertake an audit of this system.
- Adhere to a new requirement to follow the newly introduced fire alarm procedure, including the fire alarm permit to work system.
- The timing of the testing has been reviewed to minimise impacting the station in the event of a 'false alarm' situation.
- A clear protocol has been developed for emergency [alarm] situations; the method of escalation is detailed with contact numbers and individual roles [authorities].
- The Senior Sub Contractor Manager has been made responsible for implementing the changes which were identified as a result of the investigation.

Causes:

The principal causes of both these incidents include: lack of direction and management of the testing process; the failure to produce sufficiently clear procedures; inadequate communication channels and failures to follow established [albeit in part deficient] fire alarm testing and commissioning processes.

5th Sept - Immediate Cause

The engineers put Zones 23, 24, and 25 on Panel 15 into test mode to undertake the testing without the knowledge that one of the devices they tested was in Zone 1 which was not in test mode. When the detector [assumed to be in Zone 25 but actually in Zone 1] was tested an alarm was activated and the station was evacuated.

7th Sept - Immediate Cause

The engineer was testing call point device No. 1 on Panel 4 which he assumed to be configured to a grey link; the device was actually configured as a full cause and effect alarm, consequently the test resulted in a near evacuation of the station.