

# RAIB Bulletin 02/2008

## Container door struck by a passenger train in January 2008

### Description of the incident and the findings of the RAIB

1. In January 2008 a passenger train running on a four-track railway struck the open door of a container on its right-hand (non-driver's) side. This container formed part of the load of a freight train which was stopped at a signal on an adjacent line. The train was travelling at approximately 45 mph (72 km/h) when the collision occurred.
2. At the time of the collision the freight train had been stopped by the controlling signaller in order to investigate a report of an open door on the train. This report had been made to a signaller on another panel by the driver of a third train, who had observed the open door as the freight train passed through a station.

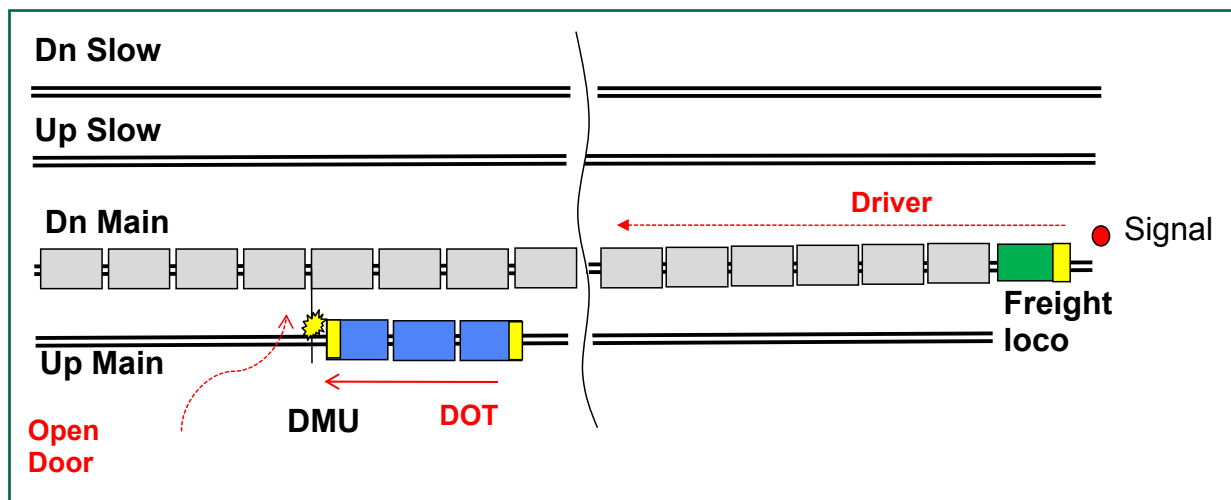


Figure 1 – position of trains

3. No-one was injured as a result of the collision. The multiple unit forming the passenger service sustained damage to the front cab area including damage to paintwork and minor damage to the fibre glass body shell. A front light unit also needed replacement. The container involved sustained severe damage to its right hand side door and is thought to be beyond economic repair. The cargo inside the container was undamaged.
4. The likely explanation for the door of the incident container being open was that it was tampered with whilst the freight train was stationary in a siding for 30 minutes in order to allow for a crew change.

5. The line adjacent to the freight train was open because the signaller receiving the report of the open door did not reach a clear understanding with the reporting driver as to its position. This signaller made an incorrect assumption as to which side of the train was affected because of the location of the reporting train, and subsequently passed incorrect information on to the controlling signaller.
6. Following the collision the container door was secured with nylon packing band by the driver of the freight train, who then informed the signaller that the train was safe for forward movement to its destination without restriction. This type of banding is not suitable for securing loads and could break. Its use to secure the container door in this way therefore created a risk that the door could once again come open and strike another train, a trackside object, a passenger standing on a station platform or a track worker.

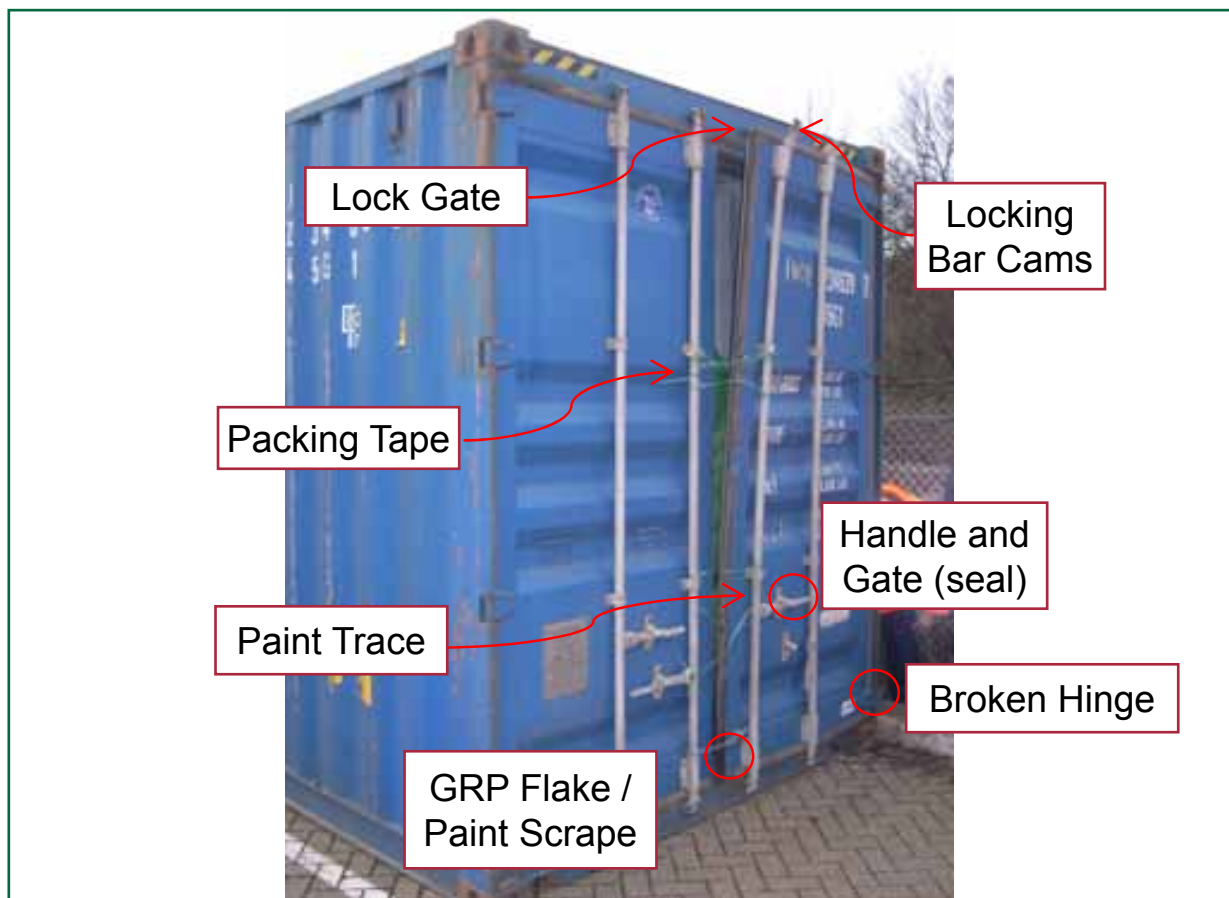


Figure 2 – damage to container

7. In securing the door in this way, the driver did not ensure that the container was made safe to travel by a competent person and then did not arrange for the affected vehicle to be detached at the nearest point following emergency action as is required by Section F of the Working Manual for Rail Staff - Freight Train Operations.
8. The freight operator concerned gives no formal training to drivers as to what actions are required when damaged container doors cannot be closed.

### Learning Points

9. Following a review of the evidence, RAIB has decided not to conduct a full investigation as it does not believe that a full investigation would lead to the identification of any further significant lessons that would improve the safety of railways or prevent railway accidents and incidents. However, the RAIB does believe that there are some valuable learning points in the actions taken by the freight operator concerned which may be of interest to other operators.
10. These are:
  - The need to brief drivers about ensuring that loads are safely secured after an incident.
  - The possibility of obtaining suitable securing equipment which could be placed in locomotive cabs for use in similar situations (note - this would also require that drivers become competent in making such loads safe to travel).
  - Reporting all tampering incidents to the BTP, as some are currently being reported only to port police forces. This effectively under-reports route crime and diminishes the ability of the BTP to target preventative action against tampering. In addition BTP can advise on the security of sidings and steps that might be taken to reduce the risk to trains in transit.
11. The RAIB has written to the freight operator concerned with its conclusions and decision

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