

Report 02/2017: Collision at Plymouth station

On publication of RAIB's report concerning a collision at Plymouth station, Simon French, Chief Inspector of Rail Accidents said:

“This collision caused great distress to the large numbers of passengers and staff involved, particularly those who suffered injuries. It occurred when a train was routed into a platform that was already occupied by a stationary high speed train. This form of train working, known as permissive platform working is not unusual on the UK's busy network and is usually performed safely. Platform sharing allows trains to be joined together or, as was intended in this case, can facilitate the easy movement of passengers between connecting train services.

“This accident reinforces the need for drivers to take great care when signalled into an occupied platform - assumptions should never be made about the length of platform that is unoccupied. This learning applies to all drivers but is particularly applicable to those who are inexperienced or new to a route. For this reason we have today issued a recommendation to Great Western Railway concerning the training and assessment of new drivers to better prepare them for permissive platform working. I am also urging other train operators to think about how well they prepare their drivers for similar circumstances.

“Although the RAIB recognises the need for permissive working in station platforms, we have recommended that Network Rail, in conjunction with train operators, carries out a review of the way it is implemented at all stations where permissive platform working is currently authorised. This should include an assessment of a range of risk factors, including the information provided to the signallers when deciding whether or not to route a train into an occupied platform.”

Newsdate: 13 February 2017