

Report 08/2018: Collision at Stainforth Road level crossing, 11 January 2018

On publication of RAIB's report concerning a collision at Stainforth Road level crossing, Simon French, Chief Inspector of Rail Accidents said:

"No motorist wants to encounter an obstruction on an unlit road after dark. Large animals or fallen trees are to some extent a normal part of rural life. But to find part of a freight train, stationary and with no visible lights, looming out of the darkness on a level crossing in the early hours of the morning, must have been a truly terrifying experience. There was no warning. The level crossing barriers had risen, and the road lights had stopped flashing, over a minute before the car approached the crossing. The driver of the car that hit this train was lucky to escape with her life.



"This is not the first time in recent years that a motorist has encountered a train on a level crossing without any prior warning. At Moreton-on-Lugg in 2010, the signaller was able to raise the barriers with a train approaching because an old-fashioned design permitted it. The resulting collision cost the life of a passenger in a car. The situation was similar at Stainforth Road: the level crossing equipment was over forty years old and the way it was configured meant that the automatic barriers would rise even though the rear end of a train was still standing on the crossing.

"RAIB's report on the Moreton-on-Lugg accident recommended that Network Rail should enhance its level crossing management processes so that the risk posed by such historical designs could be better understood and more effectively managed. Six years later, this is another example of a latent condition in an old design which presented a risk to the safety of the public. I urge Network Rail to redouble its efforts to identify such conditions, to assess the risk they create and to consider ways of reducing risk to road users."

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