

Collision between mobile elevating work platforms, Rochford, Essex, 25 January 2020

On publication of RAIB's report into the collision between mobile elevating work platforms, Rochford, Essex, on 25 January 2020, Simon French, Chief Inspector of Rail Accidents, said:

“Although the consequences of this accident were minor, the people who were in the machine that was struck could easily have been killed if they had not been wearing their safety harnesses.

“Our investigation found a catalogue of errors and omissions which could have had much more serious consequences. We found duplicated lines of control, leading to confusion and a lack of clarity about who was in charge of the work and the machinery that was being used. As well as the safety risk this creates, it's also inefficient and wasteful. Network Rail needs to find a more effective way of managing the movements of multiple vehicles in worksites.

“It was particularly disturbing to find underlying evidence that racial, language and cultural tensions were factors in the accident at Rochford. Safety relies on mutual respect within teams, for each other and for each person's role. If this is lacking for any reason, then as well as creating a culture of disrespect, it creates an environment in which accidents are more likely to happen. I am pleased that Network Rail has already recognised this problem in one of its subsidiary companies and is taking action to improve the situation.”