

Fatal accident near Roade, 8 April 2020

On publication of RAIB's report concerning a Fatal accident near Roade, 8 April 2020, Simon French, Chief Inspector of Rail Accidents, said:

"This tragic and unnecessary loss of another life was the third fatal accident to track workers that RAIB has investigated in the last three years. This year, in February, there has been yet another, at Surbiton in Surrey.

"Unsafe behaviour on site is a familiar theme. Everyone working on the railway has a responsibility to themselves and their colleagues, which includes not letting dangerous or non-compliant actions go unchallenged. Managers need to be aware of staff behaviour, and the management structure should make it a normal part of their work to be getting out there, and seeing what goes on. It's all very well to check paperwork, but it's important to know what is really happening on the ground.

"There still doesn't appear to be sufficient management focus on what people are actually doing. In this case, the person who was killed was in the habit of walking in the four-foot when he didn't need to. His co-workers knew he did this- but he hadn't been picked up on it.

"What makes this even sadder is that the work he had been doing that morning wasn't necessary: proper planning would have identified that there was no reason for people to go on the track every day during this project to apply and remove earthing straps. We are recommending that Network Rail reviews its processes with the aim of minimising the need for track access in connection with operating the electric traction supply system. I hope that this will help to prevent any more such tragedies."