

Near miss at Coltishall user worked crossing, Norfolk, 21 January 2021

On publication of RAIB's report concerning the near miss at Coltishall user worked crossing, Norfolk, 21 January 2021, Andrew Hall, chief inspector of rail accidents, said:

“This very near miss involved two road vehicles and took place at a user worked level crossing on a public road. Level crossings are one of the biggest sources of risk on the UK's railways. RAIB has investigated many accidents and incidents over the last sixteen years and noted considerable improvement in the way risk at many types of level crossing is managed. However, we feel at present the greatest scope for safety improvement exists at user worked crossings, whether on private or public roads. The significant number of such crossings on public roads is of concern because most motorists are unlikely to be familiar with the concept of a level crossing which they must operate themselves. Because of this, they may not use the crossing safely as was the case in this incident. Over more than 20 years, the railway was aware that the safety arrangements at this crossing should be improved, but it seems that bringing about such change was too difficult. The regulatory structure in place to oversee level crossing safety did not result in action being taken at this crossing in time to avoid this incident.

“Our recommendations seek to promote safety improvements at user worked crossings on public roads and to check that regulatory actions being taken to make such improvements easier to achieve have the desired effect.”