

Collision between a passenger train and a hand trolley at Challow, Oxfordshire, 21 October 2021

On publication of RAIB's report concerning the collision between a passenger train and a hand trolley at Challow, Oxfordshire, 21 October 2021, Andrew Hall, Chief Inspector of Rail Accidents said:

“Systems and processes designed to detect any equipment left on the track before lines re-open after maintenance work, should not be reliant solely on human performance in the middle of a dark night. There are technological solutions which can assist with addressing this issue, and this accident is an example of an opportunity missed.

“Our investigation found that the railway had identified the risk of equipment, such as hand trolleys, being left on the line and that it could mitigate this risk by improving the line clear verification process. However, it had not yet implemented the changes required when this accident occurred. This meant that the process remained vulnerable to human error. In this case, this vulnerability was made worse because relevant procedures were not followed correctly. Technology has an important role to play in improving the safety of the railway and it is important that the development of solutions to better support staff are prioritised.

“It is also a concern that hand trolleys were routinely being used on the track at night without displaying red lights. But it is of equal concern that no activity to monitor this requirement was being undertaken. Once again, assurance activities intended to check that rules are being followed and that processes are being implemented correctly were not effective.”