

Derailment of a passenger train near Walton-on-Thames, surrey, 4 March 2024

On publication of RAIB's report concerning the derailment of a passenger train near Walton-on-Thames, surrey, 4 March 2024, Andrew Hall, Chief Inspector of Rail Accidents said:

“Following a passenger train striking redundant rail on the track in 2018, RAIB issued Urgent Safety Advice to Network Rail regarding safety of the line after engineering work. Since this advice was issued, RAIB has examined a number of further accidents caused by objects, including temporary road-rail access points and a trolley, being left on the track after the completion of maintenance work. These accidents caused damage to the railway infrastructure, the trains involved and resulted in temporary closures to the affected lines. This most recent accident at Walton-on-Thames resulted in a passenger train derailing at speed. Although no one was hurt on this occasion, the train could easily have deviated from the line of the track and struck other trains or objects.

“Maintenance work is often carried out at night which makes ensuring the line is subsequently safe for the passage of trains particularly challenging. The risk is very clear. Unfortunately, this accident happened because that risk was not effectively managed. This, following other similar recent incidents, should serve as a stark reminder of the importance of effectively managing the risk of objects being left on the track after overnight maintenance.”