

Oliver Stewart
RAIB Recommendation Handling Manager



30 May 2024

Mr Andy Lewis
Deputy Chief Inspector of Rail Accidents

Dear Andy,

RAIB Report: Wrong side signalling failure and derailment at Dalwhinnie, Badenoch and Strathspey on 10 April 2021

I write to provide an update¹ on the action taken in respect of recommendation 5 addressed to ORR in the above report, published on 26 September 2022.

The annex to this letter provides details of actions taken in response to the recommendations and the status decided by ORR. The status of recommendation 5 is '**Closed**'.

We do not propose to take any further action in respect of the recommendation, unless we become aware that any of the information provided has become inaccurate, in which case I will write to you again.

We will publish this response on the ORR website.

Yours sincerely,

Oliver Stewart

¹ In accordance with Regulation 12(2)(b) of the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005

Recommendation 5

The intent of this recommendation is to reduce the likelihood of essential signal maintenance testing tasks being overlooked and not completed.

Network Rail should review its arrangements for recording progress when carrying out testing defined in its signal maintenance testing handbook. This should take into account environmental and other challenges relevant to the workplace and make enhancements that ensure practical contemporaneous recording of:

- the completion of each test step
- relevant test results, measurements, and findings.

ORR decision

1. Network Rail has addressed the risk of signal maintenance testing tasks being overlooked and not completed by replacing the existing paper SMTH Log Sheet process with the electronic Signal Maintenance Testing Handbook (e-SMTH) App. The e-SMTH App and Portal provide a digital equivalent to the SMTH Test Plan and Log Sheets which improves visibility of Test Plan steps during testing and assurance of SMTH Log Sheets after testing. The app is now available to all Network Rail Delivery Units (DU).

2. We consider the app to be a promising development and note a robust paper process in place in the meantime before it is fully adopted. While noting a RAIB recommendation will not necessarily mean paperwork is completed correctly, Network Rail have delivered what is required by the recommendation and the SMTH recertification programme should help staff do the right thing.

3. We asked Network Rail to clarify when the other 22% of users will be given access to the app. Network Rail have stated this is an estimate based on the number of expected users and should reduce as briefing for using the app is cascaded, with the Intelligent Infrastructure programme tracking access and providing support to DUs.

4. After reviewing the information provided ORR has concluded that, in accordance with the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005, Network Rail has:

- taken the recommendation into consideration; and
- has taken action to close it

Status: Closed.

Previously reported to RAIB

5. On 23 September 2023 ORR reported the following:

Following a successful pilot, Network Rail is planning to introduce the ESMTM application, which should improve the recording of progress with testing of signalling equipment and who did what, when. The app should also improve traceability.

Update

6. On 16 April 2024 Network Rail provided the following closure statement:



[N225-14]

Dalwhinnie Rec 5.doc

Previously reported to RAIB

Recommendation 5

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ORR decision

1. Following a successful pilot, Network Rail is planning to introduce the ESMTM application, which should improve the recording of progress with testing of signalling equipment and who did what, when. The app should also improve traceability.

2. After reviewing the information provided ORR has concluded that, in accordance with the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005, Network Rail has:

- taken the recommendation into consideration; and
- is taking action to implement close it

Status: Open.

Information in support of ORR decision

3. On 29 November 2022 Network Rail provided the following initial response:

Action Plan

Please provide milestones with dates

Network Rail will review the practices for recording progress and completion of test activities defined in SMTH, the tools and media required to make those records. This review will consider the opportunities to record improved levels of data quality, attributable to the individual, time and place and if that is reasonable to gather for all or some tasks.

Note, this will be a review of whether the SWTH recording practices translate to SMTH, and how to promote completion as the testing progresses.

Evidence required to support closure of recommendation

- Minutes of review meetings
- Where updated, published revised standards
- Where created, published tools and templates

4. On 1 April 2023 Network Rail provided the following update following a request from ORR for further information:

ORR request - Can you provide an update on progress with the pilot app and the timeline for completion. How will you demonstrate that the app is beneficial? We understand the app helps with handover from one team to the next at the end of a shift. How does it indicate where you have got to in the process?

Network Rail response - *We completed the Pilot in late 2021 in 5 DUs. We informed at NMC on 29/03/23 and are now agreeing on national rollout timelines with Routes (in line with their IR processes).*

There are benefits teams in both the II programme and the Routes – between them they have completed a benefits profile and are tracking this during Rollout. In terms of soft benefits, we are going to create case studies to showcase how the workforce are using the tool/ how their work has changed.

Please see the following illustration of how a handover works:



illustration of how a
handover works.docx