



RAIL SAFETY ALERT

RSA. No.

2005-03

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SUBJECT: Stabling and security of Track Maintenance Machinery

NOTICE TO OPERATORS OF TRACK MAINTENANCE MACHINERY

Issue

At approximately 10.50am on Tuesday 1 June 2004, a heavy track maintenance machine, a ballast regulator, 'ran away' from a work site in the Adelaide Hills whilst it was left temporarily unattended. It is understood that a service brake control may have been accidentally released, and no other system for ensuring the vehicle did not move, such as a parking brake, was fitted.

The machine travelled through four actively-protected level crossings. The warning systems at these crossings did not activate. However, employees of the machines' owner were able to manually protect two of these crossings with hand signals.

An investigation of this incident has identified a number of issues relating to this type of plant, and to the systems of work surrounding the ability to secure such items against unauthorised movement.

It is recommended that following actions, in consultation with employees, be taken:

1. Ensure workers are competent in the use of braking systems fitted through a review of training programs and "on-the-job" skills assessments.
2. Review systems of work so as to ensure that a clear and effective work instruction for each type of vehicle is in place to secure vehicles against movement, and, where practicable, kept in immediate proximity to the controls of the machine. One example is the lowering of ploughs on ballast regulators.
3. Review the design and location of brake controls, and systems of work regarding brake use, to ensure that service brakes are not used or relied upon as parking brakes
4. Review the design and location of brake control valves and levers to ensure that designs eliminate, or minimise, as far as is reasonably practicable, the likelihood of same being accidentally released.
5. Investigate the fitting of effective vigilance control devices to air-braked track maintenance machines and to road-rail vehicles. A trial of a vigilance system is currently underway. The results will be distributed to the railway industry and regulators.
6. Ensure all track machinery has appropriate and effective braking systems fitted and functioning when on track.

Outcomes of these recommendations will be monitored during the annual audit program.

This notice is effective from :

24 / March / 2005

Approved :

Derek Heneker
Acting Manager, Rail Services

Date: 24/3/05