

Notice to Rail Transport Operators

Safety Alert

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1 Subject

Non-operation of level crossings on live lines due to incorrect isolation.

2 Issue

ONRSR is issuing a Safety Alert in response to several recent occurrences where level crossings were incorrectly isolated resulting in trains travelling through unprotected level crossings.

Whilst investigations are continuing it is important industry is made aware of emerging safety critical details.

- On 7 December 2020, a freight train travelled through the Torrens Road Level Crossing in Adelaide without any warning equipment activating.
- On 4 December 2020, a freight train travelled through the Cherry Street Level Crossing in Werribee without any warning equipment activating.
- On 8 January 2019 a passenger train travelled through the Thompson Road Level Crossing in North Geelong without any warning equipment activating.

All three incidents involved level crossings with multiple lines with more than one rail infrastructure manager and required partial isolation of the crossing. The level crossings were to be isolated for some lines but were required to remain operational for other lines.

However, the crossings were mistakenly isolated for the operational lines and workers were unaware of the mistake until the passage of trains through the unprotected crossing. This represents a significant risk to rail safety.

Operators are reminded to ensure:

- Level crossings are only isolated when required for the type of work being undertaken;
- The design of isolation circuits is appropriately checked;
- Isolation plans correspond to the correct stage of the project;
- Persons performing the isolation are competent, appropriately qualified and sufficiently supervised;
- Sufficient resources are available during the project;
- Appropriate tagging is carried out in location boxes;
- Appropriate records are kept in location boxes regarding temporary changes;
- Testing is performed to confirm the level crossing is working correctly for lines required to be operational; and
- Appropriate safeworking methods are implemented to ensure the safe passage of trains on operational lines during the partial isolation of the level crossing.

This advice is effective immediately.

Peter Doggett
Chief Operating Officer