

Report 16/2019: Near miss between a passenger train and lorry at Mucking AHB level crossing, Essex, 13 March 2019

On publication of RAIB's report concerning the near miss between a passenger train and lorry at Mucking AHB level crossing on 13 March 2019, Simon French, chief inspector of rail accidents, said:

"This report describes a near-miss that could so easily have turned into a disaster. Safety at automatic level crossings depends on users following the Highway Code, and not entering the crossing after the flashing lights and audible signals have started. In this case the driver of a lorry loaded with concrete followed hand signals from a railway worker and drove his vehicle onto the crossing as the lights began to flash. The lorry reversed clear just six seconds before a train passed.

"The interface between railway companies and contractors can create significant risks if it is not properly managed. It is important that railway staff, who should know how to do the job safely, take the lead in making contractors aware of the hazards that go with working near the track. No matter how small the job or the site, it only takes one concrete mixer to create the conditions for a catastrophic accident. Although the road vehicle driver had a legal duty to stop at the red flashing lights, in this case he should not have been put in such a position by taking his lead from a railway worker waving him on. Proper planning prevents poor performance."