

Southern Significant Event Fast Facts – Sussex

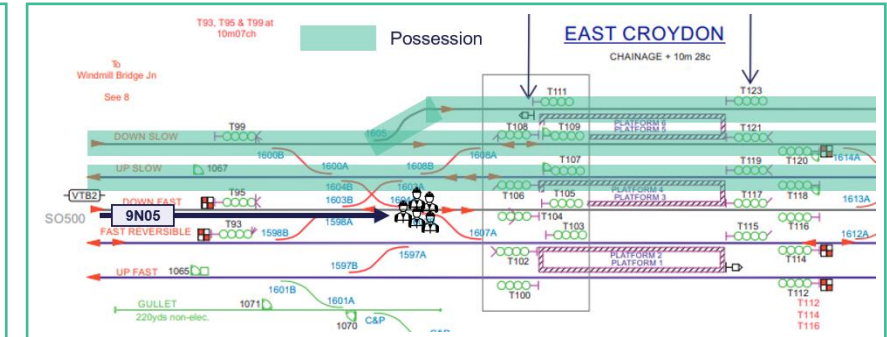


Note: This document contains information understood to date (72hrs post incident) and information may change following investigation

Near Miss at East Croydon | 02 July 2026

At approx. 02:57 on 02 July 2026, 9N05 (0114 Bedford to Three Bridges, GTR) reported a near miss with five track workers on the Down Fast approaching East Croydon.

- The work was instructed via a Method Statement prepared by the Supervisor. This was initially planned as a COSS+3 activity to undertake “East Croydon check all IBJs end posts and trim and fill, check all breathers bolts and washers” as hot weather preparation.
- The work was then planned to be undertaken during a possession, with the nature of work listed as “WON 13 Item 173 Wednesday night: Maintenance in the worksite”. The planned Safe System of Work was “At least 2m / 6 feet 6 inches (IWA or a COSS + 1-only)”.
- At 06:43 on 29 June, the pack was opened by the Person in Charge (PIC) and Verified in less than 1 minute.
- At 23:15 on 30 June, the pack was opened by the Responsible Manager and Authorised 5 minutes later.
- On the evening on 01 July, the PIC / COSS was late for work due to a cancelled train. As a result, they missed the group *Toolbox Talk* that the Section undertakes at the start of shift to discuss the work being undertaken. Instead, the PIC / COSS had a 1-2-1 conversation with the Supervisor upon arrival.
- The work group consisted of a Network Rail PIC / COSS (15+ years experience, 10 years experience as a COSS, based at Croydon since 2018, no known history of previous similar incidents) and four contractors from the same supplier. These four had a mixed level of experience but were knowledgeable of the area. None held a Site Warden or COSS competence.
- The PIC / COSS received an ES brief – witness by two colleagues – and then commenced work at 00:37, accessing the infrastructure using an access point near T123 signal at the Country end of East Croydon station. There were three blocked lines at this location. The PIC / COSS tested the third rail at this location before work commenced.
- Over the next two hours, their work led them to the London end of East Croydon station, where one of the blocked lines merges into the Down Slow. At the time of the incident, they were working in the 4ft of the open Down Fast between 1604A and 1607B points.
- As 9N05 approached at approx. 02:57, the train sounded a horn which was not immediately reacted to by the trackworkers. The work group subsequently moved out of the way as the train approached at a slow speed, with the Driver sounding a subsequent warning tone. The Driver did not apply the emergency brake but was slowing to a stop short of the group before they moved clear.
- In the process of moving clear, the work group left small hand tools in the 4ft of the Down Fast, some of which were reportedly struck by the train as it continued into the platform.
- The ES contacted the PIC / COSS to enquire about the reported incident. The team were then stood down and requested to return to the depot for Drugs & Alcohol post-incident screening (*all returned Pass / Negative results*).



Initial Factors Identified:

- The Safe Work Pack was generic, with the nature of work being non-specific and the mileages covering the entirety of the possession limits.
- The Planned safe system of work was *IWA or a COSS + 1 only* but this was not identified during the pack check, verification or authorisation.
- The verification of the pack was completed in less than 1 minute.
- The Actual safe system of work was *IWA or a COSS + 1 only* but the group consisted of five people. No Site Warden was appointed, nor was a competent one available in the group. RailHub did not prevent multiple names being signed into the pack despite the limited safe system of work selected.
- The PIC / COSS was late for work and missed the pre-shift *Toolbox Talk*.
- The layout of the railway transitioned from three blocked lines to two.
- While undertaken upon initial access, initial evidence indicates it is likely that *test before touch* was not completed as work progressed across the site, potentially missing an opportunity to identify they had moved from an isolated area onto an open line.

Risk Ranking: Potentially Significant (H/H)

DCP: Toby Willson – Head of Route Safety, Health & Env. (Sussex)

Level of Investigation: Level 3 (led by Regional Investigator)

Safety Events Reference: TBC