

Incident description:

In July 2015, a HSE Inspector witnessed an unsafe working practice in the central reserve of a high speed dual carriageway, whilst travelling the Highways England network. Central reserve barrier repair works were being undertaken at night under a lane closure installed on the Eastbound carriageway. However the Inspector witnessed operatives working on the Westbound side of the barrier, where the central reserve was particularly narrow & where no lane closure was in place. This was raised as a near miss and thoroughly investigated by the contractor.

Investigation/findings:

Following the investigation, it was found that the Safe Working Procedure, which the contractor had in place, hadn't been adhered to. This resulted in works being undertaken in an unsafe environment, without appropriate safety zones in place. A summary of the findings are listed below:

Decisions made by the TM Foreman and Lead Installer on site, did not align with the company Procedure and put the workforce at high risk.

Since the ban on carriageway crossings, it hasn't always been possible for Supervisors to determine exact widths of central reserves at locations across the network, in advance of repair works being undertaken.

Barrier damage locations were sometimes being detailed on H&S paperwork, to align with the direction of travel when the incident/damage occurred, to assist with DCP claims.

Following a local investigation, a full company-wide review of the Safe Working Procedure was undertaken. This led to several changes and improvements being made, which are summarised to the right.

For more information about this incident please contact
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Actions:

- In order to enable Supervisory staff to accurately measure central reserve widths across the network, they have been provided with high resolution aerial mapping software, which enables them to take accurate measurements from the safety of their desks at any point on the network.
- Safety zones / working zones were reviewed and increased.
- The Procedure itself was restructured and simplified, such that the default for undertaking central reserve barrier repairs, is to install back to back lane closures.
- Traffic management layouts were reviewed and simplified where possible, with the ban on carriageway crossing elimination in mind.
- The revised Procedure was fully briefed out to all Managerial, Supervisory and Operational staff.

Information about alerts process contact
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