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# Farnborough level crossing: Train missed users by six seconds - report

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Dozens of people were crossing the line at Farnborough last May when the warning came of an approaching train

**Pedestrians continued using a "high-risk" level crossing despite warning lights and an alarm, and were missed by a train by six seconds, the Rail Accident Investigation Branch has said.**

Dozens of people were crossing the line at Farnborough last May when the warning came of an approaching train.

But because they were holding the gate open for each other the remote locking system failed and the attendant had to intervene to close it.

There were no reported injuries.

Network Rail said it was working to deliver a new accessible footbridge at the station "within the next year".



The driver saw people on the crossing ahead and applied the train's emergency brake and sounded the horn, the RAIB said

About 144 people - mainly school and college students - began safely crossing the line on 19 May 2022, the RAIB said.

However, when about half of the group had crossed, the stop lights changed from green to red and the audible warning started, indicating a train was approaching.

But as each person was holding the gate open for the next, when the crossing attendant turned the switch to lock the gate, crossing users continued to pass through it and the attendant had to intervene to close it, leading to the "near miss".

The RAIB said the crossing was considered "a high-risk location because of the limited sighting of trains, the number of daily users and a history of safety incidents".

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Its investigation found Network Rail "had not developed a plan or training which would enable the crossing attendant to effectively manage the residual risks that remained at the crossing following the installation of lockable gates".

It also found the project to construct an accessible footbridge "had not obtained planning approval over a prolonged period because of land ownership issues and the need to design a compliant structure which was suitable for the constrained site".

It made a recommendation to Network Rail regarding improvements in the risk assessment process.



The RAIB made a recommendation to Network Rail regarding improvements in the risk assessment process for footpath level crossings

Andrew Hall, of RAIB, said a serious accident was probably avoided due to the "quick thinking" of the crossing attendant.

He added: "If a known level of residual risk is allowed to persist for a long time, the chances of it manifesting itself as an accident or serious incident will inevitably rise.

"This is what happened at Farnborough North and is why the incident holds a powerful lesson."

Network Rail said it welcomed and accepted the recommendations.

It added: "Despite having warning lights, sirens and a crossing attendant on site, this incident demonstrates there still is potential for it to be misused with gates held open and the warning system being ignored."

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