

# Confidential Safety Information Reporting Scheme



## **Blacked out signal system**

It was reported that when performing electrical work at a railway location near Condobolin, a contract electrician opened a live switchboard. He later disconnected a circuit that supplied power to the signalling system. He then left the location, unaware that the signalling system had been blacked out.

### ***CSIRS Requirement***

The Office of Transport Safety Investigation (OTSI) sought verification of the claims from the infrastructure operator, as well as specific comment about:

- Processes for inducting contractors to a work site and work functions.
- Appropriateness and effectiveness of contractor supervision.
- The defences offered by the safety management system to obviate the impact of this sort of occurrence.

### ***Investigation outcome***

The infrastructure operator confirmed that the incident had occurred.

The operator's investigation found that, during renovations to a work shed at Condobolin, the switchboard had to be disconnected. There was no signage to alert the electrician that the switchboard provided power to the signalling system.

In response to the matters that OTSI had sought specific comment, the operator advised that.

- The site induction and briefing of the contract electrician was carried out by suitable qualified Condobolin-based staff.
- The contract electrician was qualified for the work he was undertaking and was supervised by the same staff member who carried out the site induction.
- When the signal system fails and the signals are subsequently blacked out, train crews are required to ensure that the points are clipped and locked before proceeding with caution.

### ***Safety Action***

The operator has repositioned the switchboard for the signalling equipment at Condobolin. Arrangements have also been made to install a lockable cupboard for the switchboard, with suitable warning signs to alert personnel that the switchboard is a power supply to the signalling system.

## ***OTSI Action***

OTSI has advised the reporter of the response, actions and plans provided by the responsible operator.

The Transport Safety Regulation division of the Independent Transport Safety and Reliability Regulator has been advised of this occurrence so that it can monitor the effectiveness of Safety Actions undertaken and proposed by the operator.

The incident outcomes of the inquiries made by both OTSI and the responsible operator have been recorded in the OTSI's Safety Investigation Database for future review and safety trend analysis.