

## **Rail Worker Involved In Near Miss Incident**

It was reported that a near miss had occurred between a rail worker and an XPT service. The employee involved was reported to have marginal hearing and should not have been working alone.

Compounding the issue of working alone on track is that often the work must be carried out in isolated areas without effective communication.

### ***CSIRS Requirement***

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

- RailCorp's awareness of this practice.
- The appropriateness of personnel working alone, within the rail corridor and the effectiveness of RailCorp policy to control this issue.
- RailCorp's expectation of all tiers of management to proactively resolve safety issues, and how this is inculcated into performance expectations, procedures and training programs.
- The appropriateness of current testing standards for hearing, consistent with an employee's work function.
- How RailCorp define appropriate testing standards for employee hearing.
- Arrangements employed by RailCorp to assign operational duties for workers with hearing impediments.
- The appropriateness of communication mechanisms for personnel working within the rail corridor, particularly in remote locations.

### ***Investigation outcome***

The response received from RailCorp identified the policy in place for the management of hearing tests for employees, and the existence of the requirement for a 'look out' when conducting 'No Authority Required' (NAR) track work. RailCorp assert that a lone worker on the rail corridor involved in a near miss must have involved a breach of safe working, as Controlled Signal Blocking (CSB) would not have been in place, and if working under NAR, no lookout was present. RailCorp did not verify this reported incident.

The response further identified the existence of OHS committees and regular management safety meetings, which provide a forum for employees to identify and address safety concerns.

Communication devices are available in a variety of forms, including radio, CDMA and satellite mobile telephones. The use of specific means is determined on a case by case basis through risk assessment.

### ***Safety Action***

The operator has maintained that this incident must have been a breach of safe working and not a situation where inadequate safety measures were available. RailCorp will maintain the current standards and procedures applicable to this incident.

### ***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 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.