

Roof Hatch Safety Chains

It was reported by a rail maintenance employee that the safety chains were missing from the roof hatch in the middle cars of a Sydney Suburban passenger train. The train was allowed into service despite it being reported that the safety chains were missing. If the roof hatch opened, and latched in the open position, it could damage and bring the down the overhead electrical wires.

CSIRS Requirement

The Office of Transport Safety Investigation (OTSI) sought verification of the claims from the operator, as well as specific comment about the safety implications associated with such a practice.

Investigation outcome

The operator advised that if the safety chain was missing for a short period (a number of days) then there is no significant risk as it would take considerably longer for the 'T' bolt to vibrate loose and leave the roof hatch unsecured.

RailCorp acknowledged that the reporter had allowed a systemic issue to be identified in that the documentation associated with the management of roof hatch safety chains requires further improvement.

Consequently, RailCorp intended to amend the Train Operations Manual to include consideration of a minimum safety standard for roof hatch safety chains. Additionally RailCorp will include roof hatch safety chains as part of their technical maintenance plan review.

OTSI Action

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

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