Ashtead Level Crossing – Unplanned Failures (December 2025)

Context

Network Rail has been working alongside multiple stakeholders to minimize disruption to road and pedestrian traffic in the event of an unplanned failure at Ashtead Level Crossing.

This document provides an overview for residents and local stakeholders on the process by which Network Rail and emergency services respond to such failures.

Network Rail recognises the almost unique situation of the Ashtead Level Crossing which acts as the only vehicular access/exit point for approximately 600 households and for the emergency services. In order to simplify repairs after possible mechanical breakdowns, Network Rail has positioned additional spare parts at this crossing. These include:-

A) Barriers
B) Batteries

In addition, should a mechanical failure occur on one of the lifting mechanisms, Network Rail will replace the same parts on all four mechanisms either at the time of repairing the fault or afterwards, depending on how this impacts the rectification.

Response Process

Stage 1 – Fault Identification

Network Rail identifies an issue with the railway infrastructure leading to an unplanned failure of Ashtead Level Crossing.

Actions Taken:

- The Network Rail signaller informs Network Rail Route Control of the failure.
- Train operators are notified.
- Network Rail Route Control notifies the Control Rooms of SECAMB and Fire & Rescue Service.
- Network Rail Route Control notifies BT Police and Surrey Police
- Two Mobile Operations Managers (MOM) are dispatched from either Wimbledon or Surbiton to investigate the failure. Target response time is as soon as possible. Whole network risk needs to be considered. Final decisions on resource allocation will be made by the Incident Controller
- Maintenance teams are advised and instructed to investigate the fault.

The signaller will apply the rules and regulations appropriate to the situation, depending on the nature of the failure this could be to lock the barriers down, run trains at caution or to block the passage of trains over the crossing. See https://www.rssb.co.uk/

Stage 2 – Fault Rectification

Network Rail initiates the process of restoring the level crossing to normal operation to alleviate local road congestion.

Actions Taken:

- The MOMs arrive on site and liaise with the signaller to establish the most suitable method of working, the options available are dependent on the particular failure but this could include:
    - The MOMs using a local control unit to operate the barriers to the signaller's instructions
    - The MOMs acting as "eyes" for the signaller and reporting when the crossing is clear and safe for trains
    - The MOMs displaying signs on each side of the crossing explaining that the crossing is closed. There are two signs on each MOM vehicle however Network Rail needs to give careful consideration on where to place signage on the highway.
    - The MOMs accessing the boom pedestals and manually pumping the barrier up and down
    - The primary goal is to facilitate the safe running of trains however the staff on site will be aware of the critical nature of the crossing at Ashtead. If repairs are to be prolonged, the MOMs and signaller work in tandem to alleviate traffic queues.
    - The MOMs operate the barriers should a medical emergency arise.
- The MOMs will remain in contact with Route Control and advise of traffic conditions at the barriers and either BTP or Surrey Police should be requested to attend to support the management of traffic.
- Although maintenance staff will have been advised of the failure at the same time as the MOMs they will often arrive after them as initially they may have interrogated data systems to better understand the fault and loaded spares that are likely to be necessary. Once the team arrives on site, they will begin work to rectify the failure.

Stage 3 – Restoration of Normal Operations

Once Network Rail completes the necessary repairs, normal operations at the level crossing resume.

The Residents' Association also posed other questions which might also occur to residents:-

Q.1. Whilst probably just an order of typing rather than a list in priority order we would prefer the emphasis is on residents' convenience and safety.

A.1 Our first responsibility is to the safe running of the railway hence the Train Operators will be first in being notified.

Q.2. May we see a copy of the Rule and Regulations referred to above

A.2. All rules and regulations are available on the RSSB website. They are not owned by Network Rail as they are an industry standard. https://www.rssb.co.uk/

Q.3. Would running trains at caution permit the MOMs to operate the barriers manually more easily or frequently?

A.3. Running trains at caution makes them travel slower so they will take longer to get from the protecting signal to the crossing and over to the other side so I would expect barrier down time to be significantly greater than if they were working normally.

Q.4. Is there a system within Network Rail maintenance similar to a vehicle recall for a faulty part? I.e. Part XYZ has failed at Barnes Crossing. Does Ashtead have this part and should we consider replacing those proactively?

A.4. There are constant ongoing reviews of asset types and reliability and the route and wider business, regularly learning from sharing of best practise, whether that be asset specific or operational response.

Q.5. Using Network Rail's new digital advice facility offered to lineside properties would it be possible to add to the system a Text message advice that the Level Crossing is closed due to a fault and that a maintenance team has been despatched to rectify the fault?

A.5. We cannot use the new Digital Lineside Notification for this type of service. It is primarily used for notification of upcoming works and not in response to ongoing issues.