

## DO THE WIGHT THING

Safety first approach helps rail workers  
keep their heads above water

**RENEWING one of the more unusual stretches of line in the UK, means a unique set of safety challenges for rail workers at Ryde on the Isle of Wight.**

The line connecting Ryde Pier Head and Ryde Esplanade stations runs 600 meters out into the Solent alongside the historically important pier.

As a vital transport link to ferry services, the line is undergoing vital maintenance to keep it running safely for future generations.

It's a job with many risk factors to consider but the approach taken by the team delivering the work has earned them gold status in the Southern region's Route to Gold safety scheme.

Read the full story on pages 4 and 5.



**Don't  
risk it**  
PAGE 2



**Don't  
slip up**  
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**Force  
for good**  
PAGE 8





# First Person

**THERE** are many risks involved in the railway business, and in this issue of *The Shield* you can read about how we go about reducing these and making our work as safe as we can.

Whether that's working above the waves to repair a historic pier (see page 4) or making sure that colleagues always feel comfortable to speak up when things don't look right (page 6), we are constantly looking at ways to ensure everyone goes home safe every day.

One of the most dangerous activities we do each day is not on the railway at all – it's driving our cars, vans and HGVs on the road.

For this reason, after a successful trial within Network Rail High Speed, we will be

launching an app, called CheckedSafe, across the Southern region. It is the primary method for completing a daily use walkaround vehicle check and will work alongside In-Cab Safety System (ICSS) fobs to make it even easier to know that our vehicles are safe.

The app records pre-use vehicle checks alongside vehicle defects. It also protects you with the evidence that the checks have been robustly completed. This means we can provide assurance that the checks are being completed on company vehicles.

We have made some improvements to the app but we know there are more needed, and these will be rolled out over the next few months.

You can find out more by scanning the QR code, where you can also leave feedback to help improve it further. In the meantime enjoy this issue and stay safe.



**Darren Matthias, road vehicle compliance manager, Southern Region Road Fleet**

## The Shield

This paper is produced for:

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## EMBRACING EQUITY

For International Women's Day, the Southern region put together a video made by colleagues. They each explained what the theme #EmbraceEquity meant to them. Scan the code to see the video.



### ARTWORK DRAWS IN CUSTOMERS

**TALENTED Mike Ezra Kirabo, a Network Rail customer service assistant at London Bridge, has helped turn the station into an art gallery, by displaying some of his work.**

He had previously exhibited his work at the station two years ago during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. His new exhibition, *The Post Pandemic Experience*, captures life at the station now passengers have returned.

"I wanted to do something to show brighter and happier times," said Mike. "It's about bringing people back together, so I decided to draw colleagues as a dedication to them and their hard work."

## HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE SHIELD

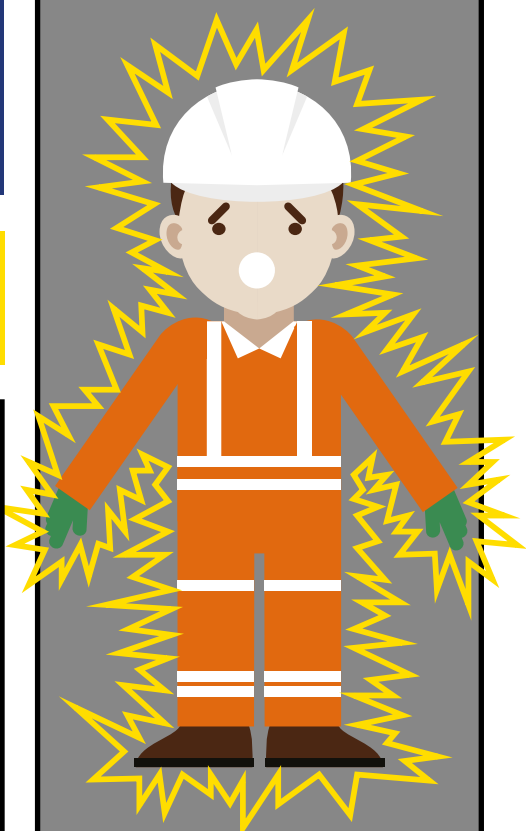
*The Shield* has been bringing you news, features and safety advice for eight years now, earning praise, and a couple of awards, along the way.

It's one of the most important ways of sharing news with workers across Network Rail's capital delivery supply chain in the Southern region. That's why we want to know what you think of it, and get your feedback about what could make *The Shield* even better.

Scan the code to have your say.



# DON'T RISK IT



Electricity is a familiar hazard to most rail workers and working with or nearby live currents remains one of the most high-risk activities in the industry.

The Electrical Safety Step Up is an interactive 90-minute session that guides you through a series of films that prompt discussion around culture. It focuses on our behaviours and raises awareness of the potential risks associated with high voltage electricity posed by human factors.

By taking some time out of your day to discuss electrical safety everyone will become aware of the risks involved and realise that we must all work together to improve – because nothing is more crucial than every person returning home each day.

Scan the QR code to find out more.



# GOLD STANDARDS

Meet the latest winners in the 'Olympics' of railway safety and improvement

SITES across the region are celebrating success in the latest round of the Construction Route to Gold scheme.

The initiative promotes collaborative working behaviours, to embed a culture of continuous improvement within the rail industry.

Covering the Southern region's Capital Delivery supply chain, it also aims to reduce costs caused by re-work.

A series of performance measures are used to calculate a score for each site, with the top performers earning the sought-after 'gold' status.

Those achieving gold in Period 12 include work to restore a historic line on a seaside pier (see page 4), and the roll out of the new negative short-circuiting device (NSCD) technology in Fareham, Hampshire.

NSCDs provide secure and safe isolations to the DC traction power system, creating a safer process and reducing the need for workers to access the railway to apply straps during isolations.

At Fareham, the project involves modifying an existing sub-station and TP hut locations.

"It's a great example of a collaborative working between the civil and electrical departments," said Jaco Janse Van Vuuren, construction manager for Network Rail.

"When entering their sites, you immediately notice their safety and notification boards (pictured below). This indicates that the team had executed a pre-planned safety protocol to make sure everyone on site is well informed of the risks.

"Their robust weekly safety inspections and audits highlight any new risks, allowing planning of suitable control measures. Their effective housekeeping also helps control and eliminate workplace hazards – poor housekeeping frequently contributes to incidents."



## GOLD SITES

(Period 12)

- Octavius Infrastructure:** Wessex NSCD phase 4 and 5
- Atkins:** Feltham phase 5 (Winnersh sub)
- BAM:** Petts Wood Access for All
- Network Rail:** Cliffsend & Sevenscore level crossing
- Octavius Infrastructure:** Ryde Pier renewal (see page 4)

## SILVER SITES

(Period 12)

- BAM:**
- Streatham Access for All
  - London Victoria congestion ref
  - NSCD phase 3, Chislehurst sub
  - NSCD phase 3, Five Oak Green
  - NSCD phase 3, Bromley South
  - Sheerness sea canopy
  - Woolwich Dockyard footbridge
  - Peckham Rye enhancements
- Costain:** Gatwick Airport station
- Enable (BCM):**
- Feltham phase 5, Earley Station
  - Feltham phase 5, Wokingham
- Octavius Infrastructure:**
- HV switchgear renewals package 1, Ashurst
- Siemens:** Dollands Moor transformer

## TOP SCORING SITES BY ROUTE:

- **Sussex 168067:** Gatwick Airport station (Costain)
- **Kent 169770:** Petts Wood Access for All (BAM)
- **Wessex 167268:** Wessex NSCD phase 4 and 5 – Fareham (Octavius Infrastructure)
- **Southern (Signalling) 166066** – Cliffsend & Sevenscore level crossing (Network Rail)

If you would like a full score summary report, contact Paul Burr: paul.burr@networkrail.co.uk



# IN SAFE HANDS

SAFETY shouldn't be a touchy subject, but statistics point to the fact that too many of us are harming our hands on the railway.

Accident figures show us that more than a third of all injuries on Southern Capital Delivery involve hands and fingers.

There are a number of different causes but some of the most common are pinch points – getting trapped in or between equipment and other surfaces, wrong selection of tools or protection, improvised cutting and distraction or complacency.

While some are relatively minor, losing a finger or severely damaging a hand could be career ending or even life changing.

The fingertips are rich with nerves and any nerve injury can result in loss of function and take a long time to recover, therefore impacting not only your work life but also your personal life.

It's why we have clear rules about PPE and manual handling as well as training on how to correctly operate plant and tools.

There are some simple checks everyone can make to reduce the risks. Here is our handy guide: Before you start any task, ask:

Is it safe to put your hand there?

Can you increase access to the task you are undertaking?

Can you use a tool instead?

Have you selected the right tool for the job?

Do you have the correct competence/training to use the tool?

Is the designated workstation for cutting etc convenient (location/portable)?

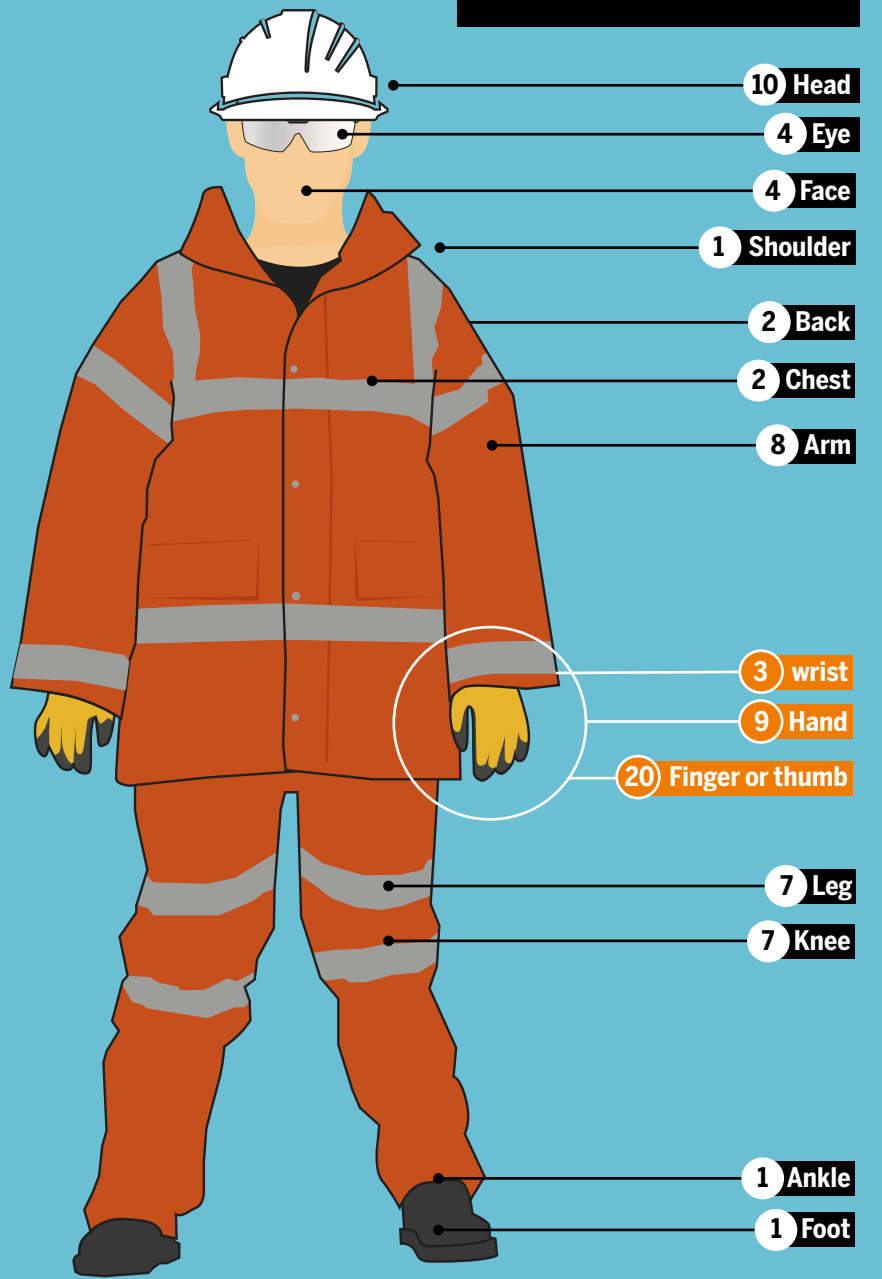
If carrying, can you see your hands, at all times?

Have you got the right glove for the task?

In the cold do you still have good dexterity?

In hot weather have you still got good grip?

If you have answered 'no' or even 'maybe not' please Take Five and find a safer way to do the task.





ON SITE

# OH, THEY DO LIKE TO BE (SAFE) BESIDE THE SEASIDE

Workers giving the railway on Ryde Pier a new lease of life are all on board when it comes to safety

**RYDE PIER** has welcomed visitors to the Isle of Wight for over 200 years. Stretching over 600m into the Solent, it is the second-longest seaside pier in the UK.

And since 1880, the railway line on the pier has been used to transport visitors to the shore and beyond.

Since October 2022, engineers have carried out major maintenance to repair, strengthen and refurbish various parts of the structure, including the stations on the pier.

Given the decades of use and being battered by the elements, a majority of the track is life-expired. Since October 2022, engineers have been working to refurbish it so trains can run safely.

The line on the pier has been closed off since the job started, with workers operating on a segregated site between two buffer zones.

**RUNNING A TIGHT SHIP**

"Sometimes it feels like we're working in an offshore industry, rather than a railway job," says Alan Venables, scheme project manager, One Wessex.

In this unusual setting, adverse weather and environmental conditions have to be monitored very carefully.

"The reality with working off pontoons is that it doesn't take much for it to become unsafe," says Alan. "That's why we've gone above and beyond to ensure that all precautions

are being taken. We have regularly updated tide schedules which are shared with the relevant teams, and anyone on a crash deck, safety boat, and work boat must wear a buoyancy aid, which are top-of-the-range and equipped with transponders and automatic inflation.

"We have an excellent safety boat team that works alongside the ferry service and the Portsmouth Harbour Master to understand their schedules and any important information, such as tide swells. There's a lot of good communication across teams, stopping work when needed and carrying on when it is safe to do so."

**IMPORTANT LINK**

The pier is still an important link to and from the island via the hourly ferry services, with the public able to access stations at both ends, so clear segregated working is crucial to allow full control of the risks.

Alan adds: "Daily briefings with different teams reinforce the limits of the site, risks involved and other key health and safety information, such as emergency points. It's important to engage with people about safety, rather than bark at them. That's something the team appreciates."

Did you know...?

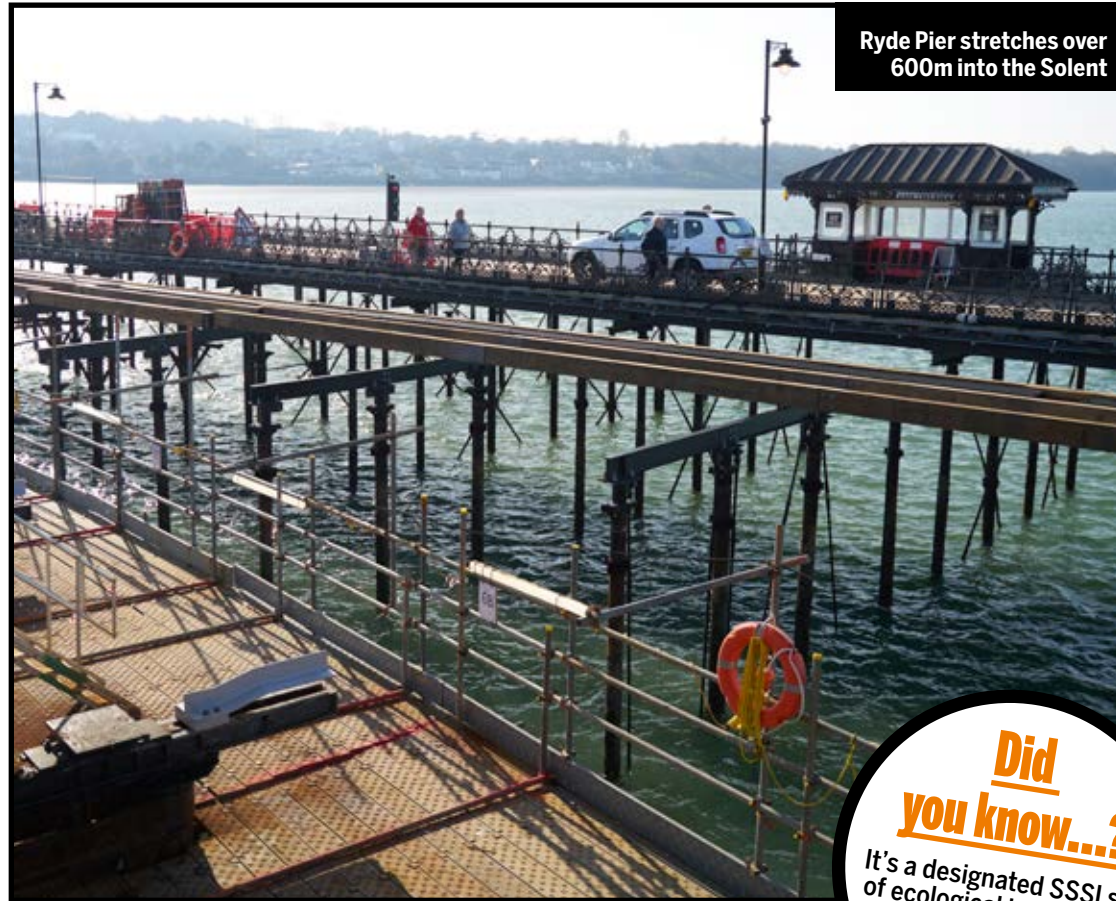
Ryde Pier is a Grade 2 listed structure.

Did you know...?

It's the second longest pier in the UK, behind Southend.

Did you know...?

It's a designated SSSI site of ecological importance, being home to Brent geese, seals and cormorants.



Ryde Pier stretches over 600m into the Solent

## MEET THE TEAM

**Mihnea 'Mikey' Pelinel, graduate engineer, Octavius**

There aren't many projects where we work above the sea! Safety in these conditions is critical. We work closely with Rebel Marine, our marine contractor, who are very experienced. We base our work on their regularly updated tide schedules.

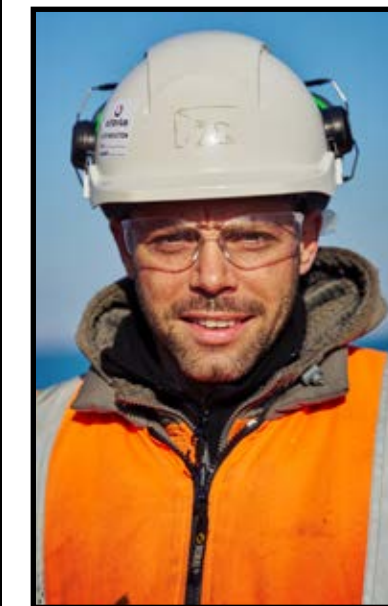


**Gavin Pratt, project manager, McNealy Brown**

We have a safety briefing every morning with the site controller and works manager. Because we're working off a crash deck, a scaffolder performs checks to ensure that everything is in place before we can start our work.

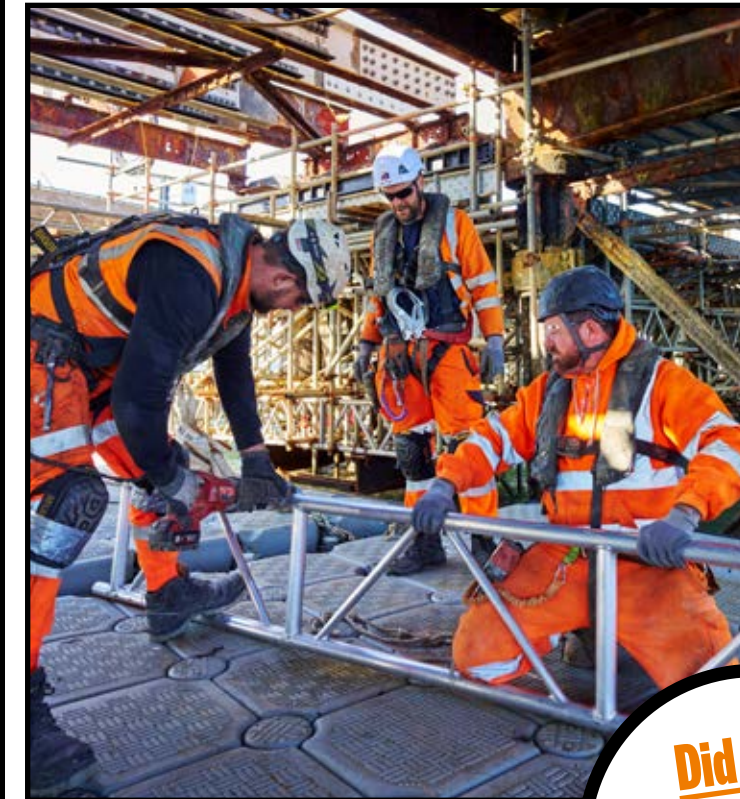
**Lee Chandler, site controller, Deploy**

I monitor all safety aspects on-site, including checking that correct PPE is being worn and tools are being used for the right task. Non-PTS staff that aren't from a railway background also work on the pier so it's important that they are aware of all the hazards associated with the site.



**Dennis Dunk, works delivery manager, Octavius**

We have experienced colleagues working on this site across the different disciplines. I've worked on other projects with a lot of these people, which certainly helps. Communication is very important and not just with our immediate workers. We look after Wightlink and other teams and vice versa.



Did you know...?

Ryde Pier is the oldest seaside pleasure pier in the world.



ALWAYS USE A SAFETY HARNESS WHEN WORKING AT HEIGHT, UNLESS OTHER PROTECTION IS IN PLACE



# LANDSLIDE VICTORY

## Innovative engineering keeps customers on the move

WHEN A major landslide left one of the tracks of the main line from London to Basingstoke hanging precariously in mid-air, colleagues faced a huge challenge to make the line safe and get services back on the move.

The slip, on an embankment to the northeast of Hook station in Hampshire, left only two tracks of the four-track railway passable by trains, with both tracks designed to be used by London-bound trains only.

The embankment is made of a mixture of London Clay and other local soils, which had become saturated after days of heavy rain and a very wet winter.

This caused the soil to give way along a 44-metre section of the 10-metre high embankment, sliding out from underneath the tracks, in what engineers call a "rotational failure".

However, thanks to some innovative thinking, a way was found to keep disruption to a minimum.

"Keeping passengers moving was critical," explained Lee Clifton, site project manager. "The team developed an innovative approach by quickly reconfiguring the tracks to 'slew' one of the coastbound lines around the landslide to allow trains to be operated normally in both directions – while the repair and stabilising work took place."

Stabilising work included removal of loose soil, installation of 45 metres of sheet pile, and backfilling with over 8,000 tonnes of stone. The bank is being stabilised beyond the slip with the installation of soil nails while remote monitors are being installed to detect any further movement.

Thanks to this innovative solution and the hard work of teams on the ground, all four lines reopened on Friday 24 February, just six weeks after the landslide.

Lee added: "A fantastic team of dedicated people have worked around-the-clock to deliver these emergency repairs in very challenging circumstances."



The early stages of preparation after the slip occurred



This shows the proximity of the slip to the open lines



Pre-augering – this allows the piles to be driven with less impact on the slip



Backfill to the piling mat



The 50m panel being removed by two Kirow cranes



The extent of the slip after the panel had been removed

# ARE YOU PSYCHOLOGICALLY SAFE?

WE KNOW that being safe at work is a mindset as well as a set of actions. But there's also an important factor known as psychological safety that enables workers to operate without fear of negative consequences.

"Psychological safety is achieved when individuals know they can speak out freely, and share ideas or concerns without ridicule, rejection, or punishment," explains Emily Mayers, senior occupational health & wellbeing specialist.

"It's a fundamental part of campaigns such as Feel Safe to Ask and Time Out Take Five. Developing a culture in which individuals feel able to question and challenge is vital, particularly in the railway in which safety is a top priority."

Here are Emily's top tips to create a psychologically safe workplace:

- 1 Encourage your team to be self-aware. This can mean widening your perspectives and understanding your own privilege and bias. If you are self-aware, you will modify your emotional reactions and behaviour. If your team is self-aware, they will do the same. This will enable more open communication, encouraging your team to speak up.
- 2 Provide accurate information and be trustworthy. Your team will trust you more if you set clear goals and keep your commitments. This will enhance a feeling of trust, developing your relationships.
- 3 Ask for suggestions/feedback from your team before making an important decision during your meetings. How

have you ever felt when someone asks you for suggestions? I know, that when my managers in the past have asked me for suggestions, it has boosted my confidence. We want our team to feel more confident.

4 Treat team members as human beings with feelings. They will feel more comfortable speaking up if they know you value them as people, not simply for their work, productivity, and success. Don't treat them like a number. They are humans with feelings.

5 Openly appreciate your team. Thanking your team members for their support and expressing appreciation will make them feel valued and motivated

# DON'T SLIP UP

Slips, trips and falls are some of the biggest dangers on any site. Here's how to minimise risk:



PPE

- 1 Carry out a risk assessment to determine what PPE is needed for every task
- 2 Always wear the required PPE for the task at hand
- 3 Check that your PPE is in good condition before beginning work



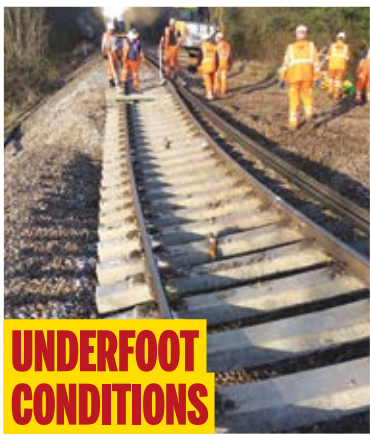
LIGHTING

- 1 Always make sure areas walked through or worked in are properly lit
- 2 Check that any lighting used doesn't create shadows or dark spots
- 3 When working on scaffolding, always use additional lighting



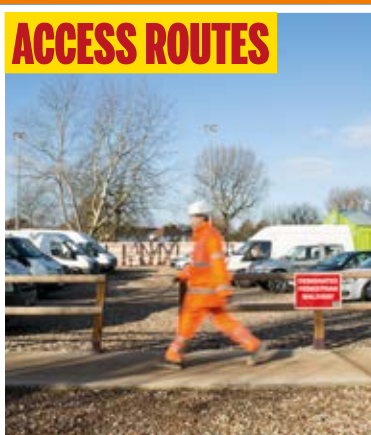
TIDY SITES

- 1 Survey your site before starting work to identify any slip or trip issues
- 2 Keep working areas tidy throughout your shift
- 3 Regularly dispose of site waste and keep designated walkways clear



UNDERFOOT CONDITIONS

- 1 Take care when walking on stairs and uneven or sloped surfaces
- 2 Be aware of your surroundings and any changes to underfoot conditions
- 3 When working on tracks, always walk on ballast and never on sleepers



ACCESS ROUTES

- 1 Always use designated walking routes where possible
- 2 Be aware of your surroundings when entering or exiting site
- 3 Telephone calls should only be taken in a designated mobile phone area



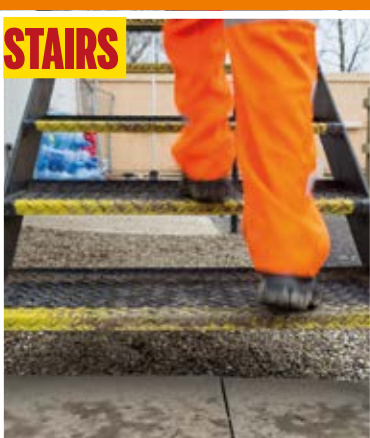
WORKING AT HEIGHT

- 1 Risk assess the task to ensure you have the correct protection
- 2 Ensure you have the required competencies for the task
- 3 A safety harness should always be used unless other protection is in place



MANUAL HANDLING

- 1 Eliminate or minimise manual handling hazards through risk assessment
- 2 Consider whether manual handling is necessary to the task
- 3 Use the correct technique and minimise twisting, stooping and reaching



STAIRS

- 1 Areas with stairs must always be well lit
- 2 Always use handrails when using stairs or steps
- 3 Stairs must always be completely free of tripping hazards and obstacles



## RAIL LIVES

# A FORCE FOR GOOD

**Obi Uduebor has mastered the art of safety**

**AS PRINCIPAL health and safety manager for the Southern region in Capital Delivery, Obi Uduebor's job is to make sure that everyone returns home in the same condition they arrived at work. "If not better!" he says.**

It's a dedication to service in ensuring the wellbeing of others that has seen him build experience in several safety critical industries, before joining Network Rail seven years ago.

And it's this instinct to care for others, that also inspired one of his favourite pastimes outside of work.

"I started learning Karate in Nigeria when I was nine, which was probably largely down to being the eldest of four brothers and wanting to be able to look after myself and protect them," he says.

By the time he was 16, Obi was awarded his first-degree black belt in karate and was actively competing across Africa, eventually becoming a national karate coach and referee.

"Over time, life got in the way, and I didn't actively train for a long time, but a couple of years ago I decided to get back into it and get back in shape," he reveals.

Obi tried out a few different martial arts before settling on jiu-jitsu and judo. In 2021 he competed at the All-stars BJJ Southern Pro event – finishing in sixth place – and a year later at the British Open in London. He is currently a third-degree black belt.

"I know martial arts has definitely helped and influenced me in my day-to-day role," he says.

"It improves your perception and understanding of risk. Jiu-Jitsu and Judo are also about constantly evolving and improving, and it's the same in this job."

## SAFETY CRITICAL

A major part of his role is getting involved in projects from the very beginning to make sure safety is up to standard. Having knowledge of how a safety-critical industry works from the ground up is important.

"During my MSc degree at the University of East London, I sought as much on-the-ground experience as I could in the railways, as well as experience gained over the years in other industries," he explains.

"As part of my internship in my second year, I was assigned to the health and safety team of an oil and gas company – and I believe that's where my interest in this field first began.



**Obi with the Nigerian karate team on arrival from the All African Games**



"As a result, people understand that when I assess a situation, and say 'that's not going to work', it's because I've done the job myself and have had a first-hand experience."

Obi's approach to safety is summed up in a mental exercise he uses regularly.

"I ask the question: 'imagine you're in charge of this site. Would you be comfortable allowing a loved one to work here?' If there's any hesitation at all, I advise them to go back and take another look," he says.

"We have an obligation to address the things in our control and understand that the people working for us are someone's child, parent, or spouse. We must care for them."

While he may be skilled in martial arts, his powers do not extend to the supernatural – despite what colleagues might deduce from his name.

Joining as he did on 1 May, colleagues initially made a joking reference to Star Wars and a certain famous Jedi namesake.

"One of the first things people said to me was 'Obi-wan, May the force be with you!'" he recalls.



**WHAT DO YOU THINK? GET IN TOUCH - [SHIELD@NETWORKRAIL.CO.UK](mailto:SHIELD@NETWORKRAIL.CO.UK)**