

# **CLOCS Safety Forum**

## **Bridge Strikes: a clear and present danger**





Bridge Strikes  
are not  
a recent  
issue



Accident at Sun Arch, Winchester Road. c1967

Like other collisions, they were regarded 'par' for the course



Number of strikes  
per year...

2017/18 – **2,039**

2018/19 – **1,926**

2019/20 – **1,720**

2020/21 – **1,624**

2021/22 – **1,833**

2021/23 – **1,572**

Total = **10714**



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- 2017-2023 = 10714
- Average 1785
- Average <5 per day
- Peak <10 per day in Oct/Nov

## Top 10 Bridge Strikes

1. **Stonea Road, Stonea, Cambs = 33**
2. **Lower Down's Road, Wimbleton = 18**
3. **Harlaxton Road, Grantham Lincs = 17**
4. **Abbey Farm, Thetford, Norfolk = 15**
5. **Stuntney Road, Ely, Cambs = 12**
6. **Harefield Road, West Ruislip, London = 12**
7. **Station Road B4105, Berkswell, Solihull = 12**
8. **Station Road, Langley, Berks = 12**
9. **St John's Street, Lichfield, Staffs = 11**
10. **Coddenham Road, Needham Market = 10**









**9. Would there be fewer crashes, injuries and fatalities if more people drove within the 30mph speed limit?**

**10. If you were driving on a road with a 30mph speed limit, do you drive at a speed within that limit?**

**11. What was the last traffic offence you committed, and when was it?**

**12. What was the last unsafe driving action you made, and when was it?**



## How do you rate yourself?

**A.** On a scale of 1 – 100, with 99 being as safe as you could reasonably be on today's roads - what score would you give yourself?



## How do you rate everyone else?

**B.** On a scale of 1 – 100, with 99 being as safe as you could reasonably be on today's roads - what score would you give everyone else?



## In a recent research project Network Rail found that...

- **32%** of commercial vehicle drivers admitted to setting off without knowing the height of their vehicle
- **56%** confirmed they do not think about low bridges when planning their journey or route
- **69%** of drivers do not use anything to measure the height of their vehicle or load and often rely on others for height information
- Only **23%** of drivers always think about bridge heights when planning their route
- Only **31%** have a Truckers' Atlas in their vehicle



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# A Network Rail survey found that the main causes of bridge strikes are...

- drivers not knowing their vehicle height
- poor route planning
- poor information about low bridges along the planned route
- drivers not understanding warning signs



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## **Bridge Strikes: the Cost**



## Lord Peter Hendy CBE, Chair of Network Rail said:

*“Bridge bashers cause serious safety issues on the transport network for both road and rail users. Every incident can delay tens of thousands of passengers while we inspect the bridge and repair any damage – creating a huge cost from public funds.*”

*“.....know the height of their vehicles and be vigilant for road signs showing the height of bridges. We will report those who don't to the Traffic Commissioners, and they risk losing their licenses and livelihoods. Network Rail always looks to recover the entire repair and delay costs from the driver and the operator.”*





plus Prosecco - at  
**Haslemere's newest eatery**

Prize worth around £130; see Page 32 for details

is under way  
**at our schools**

Photos on Pages 24 & 25

# SORT IT OUT

# NOW

■ Monday's crash was the 19th major HGV collision at the A325 Wrecclesham bridge since 2014.

■ The bridge has been hit around five times a year since 2000 - Network Rail.



The vehicle, trailer and load may be severely damaged even if there are no personal injuries...

- the front of the vehicle (cab) could be extensively damaged
- the roof may be set back and smashed all the way along
- the vehicle and or trailer could be tipped on its side by the impact
- the load could be ruined and strewn all over the road



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Your company will suffer as the result of a bridge strike...

- a day of mayhem sorting everything out
- loss of vehicle work time
- loss of driver work time
- repairs to vehicle
- an increase in vehicle insurance premium



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## Your driver also suffers as a result of a bridge strike...

- a day of severe embarrassment
- anxiety, stress and worry
- prosecution and fines
- loss of HGV licence – action by the Traffic Commissioner
- points on their driving licence
- loss of their job



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The Network Rail logo consists of the words "Network Rail" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. Below the text is a stylized orange graphic that resembles a train or a series of parallel lines receding into the distance.

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Network Rail has a policy to...

- support training and education for managers and drivers
- uphold the law through the DVSA and Traffic Commissioners
- enforce claims for costs in court





Your company may be prosecuted and disciplined...

- in court
- at a Public Inquiry in front of the Traffic Commissioner – with penalties on your Operator Licence



Your company may lose business from...

- the customer whose goods were being carried at the time of the bridge strike
- other customers who hear about the collision



# **CLOCS Safety Forum**

## **Bridge Strikes: Prevention**



Network Rail recommends drivers are supported by their companies to...

- undertake training on how to prevent and avoid bridge strikes
- measure the height of all vehicles and loads
- complete height and height indicator checks during their daily walkaround/vehicle defect check
- ensure routes are planned carefully



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Peter Larnar  
Former Managing Director  
Suckling Transport

## Doing the right thing!

“The most successful aspect of management is to send every employee home to their family at the end of each shift. My greatest achievement was to do that on every shift throughout my career.

There are lots of companies whose employees are having good, innovative ideas, but unless the culture of your business provides fertile ground on which those seeds can be sown, it's pointless

We have eliminated speeding, no matter what. We have a line that we will not cross for whatever reason – it is me that ends up on a corporate manslaughter charge and I am not having it. The O-licence says I will not permit offences, and to me that means I have to take a proactive view to make sure my staff do not permit it, and I enforce it.”



To prevent Bridge Strikes  
your drivers should...

- plan their journey with bridges in mind
- always know the height of their vehicle for certain – no guesswork
- be observant for bridge warning signs



To drive safely in relation to bridges, over and under the road your driver must...

- know the **height** of the vehicle and load
- know the **width** of the vehicle and load
- if the vehicle and load are over 3 metres in height, your driver must set the height indicator in the cab to the correct height of the vehicle, trailer and load



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How will your drivers know what they are supposed to do and how to do it if you have not told them?

Your company needs a Policy.





You need a training programme for transport and workshop staff covering...

- how to record the height of vehicles and trailers
- how to access height records - all transport staff and drivers
- route planning for and with drivers
- helping drivers deal with diversions
- use of Low Bridge Detection System
- helping a driver who has had a Bridge Strike



You need a training programme for drivers covering...

- the driver responsibility points already mentioned
- how your driver can check the height of their vehicle
- route planning use a Low Bridge Detection System
- how you want a driver to drive when approaching a low bridge – regard any bridge that is marked as ‘low’
- the bridge warning signs – ahead of the bridge
- the bridge marker signs – on the bridge
- diversion signs



## The Traffic Commissioner expects...

- route Risk Assessments – identifying known low bridges and include any periods of dead-running
- route Planning/Training - including how to deal with diversions (planned and emergency)
- driver training – how to avoid bridge strikes and what to do if it happens
- ensure only large vehicle sat-navs and other routing equipment are used
- vehicle Height – ensure height is checked and recorded as part of the driver's daily walk round





Dealing with Bridge Strike prevention is a platform to...

- reduce collisions
- reduce related costs
- reduce insurance premiums

And...

- you will probably use less fuel to do the same work

**Start your plan today.**

**Schedule some time to  
Get Started!**

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