

SHEQ ALERT

ALERT TOPIC	SHEQ ALERT	REFERENCE	CRL140826
TARGET AUDIENCE	Regional Managers, Site Managers	PREPARED BY	Chris Donahue
	Site Operatives and Supervisors Other interested people	AUTHORISED BY	Chris Donahue
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INTRODUCTION

During the night shift on 6 August 2026 at M50 Bury Court, two CRL works vehicles entered the eastbound traffic management closure before formal confirmation had been received that the closure was complete and safe for access.

The operatives had been briefed that they were not to enter the work area until told it was safe. This requirement is also recorded within the National Highways shift report.

With the compound becoming increasingly busy, the operatives left in two CRL works vehicles and travelled towards the work location, approximately three minutes away, with the intention of waiting nearer the bridge.

While waiting, the operatives observed the traffic management operation and the apparent reduction in traffic. From what they could see, they assumed that the eastbound closure had been completed. However, positive confirmation had not been received, and access had not been authorised.

A Chevron traffic management operative identified the vehicles within the closure and advised that the road had not yet been fully closed. The CRL supervisor was informed, and the operatives were instructed to leave the area.

No collision, injury or damage occurred. However, entering a motorway work area before the traffic management closure had been formally confirmed had the potential for a serious or fatal vehicle interaction.

The investigation identified several contributing circumstances, including a busy compound, reduced supervisory capacity and competing induction duties. These factors are being reviewed as part of the wider investigation.

The fundamental learning is clear. The agreed safe system required the team to wait for confirmation before entry. No confirmation means no entry.

REASON FOR ISSUING THIS ALERT

- To share learning from a high-potential highways near miss. Never enter a traffic management closure based on assumption or visual judgement - no confirmation means no entry.

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CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION POINTS

- Entry into a traffic management closure must only take place following positive confirmation from the designated authorised person. No confirmation - no entry.
- Never assume a road closure is complete because traffic has reduced, cones appear to be in place, or the work area looks clear.
- The designated works access, safe holding points and person authorised to release vehicles must be clearly understood before mobilisation.
- Drivers and operatives must not self-deploy into a closure. If there is any doubt, remain in the agreed safe holding area and contact the supervisor.
- Supervisors must ensure that closure confirmation is clearly communicated before vehicles or personnel are released to the work area.
- Busy compounds, late arrivals, inductions or reduced supervisory resources must not weaken safety-critical controls.
- Any change or uncertainty in traffic management arrangements must be stopped and clarified before proceeding.
- CRL operates a no-blame culture - the purpose of reporting and investigating near misses is to understand what happened, strengthen our controls and prevent recurrence.
- The key message for all highways teams is simple: if access has not been positively authorised, do not enter.

If you have any SHEQ issues that you wish to discuss, please contact your supervisor, line manager, or a member of the SHEQ team.