

Safety Alert: Number SA-26-0013

Title	Blockwork Wall Failure and Silica Exposure Risk				SAFETY CRITICAL CATEGORY Level 1 – Routine
Applicable Date	From	10 September 2026	To	Until withdrawn	
Approved by	Michael Leah, General Manager EMD				
Issued by	Craig Jones, Head of Infrastructure Delivery				
Location	M1 Network				
Distribution	All personnel with MTS Operator Job Role				

Background

During a routine track patrol, a blockwork wall failure was identified at Cross Passage XP082. The failure was attributed to incomplete strengthening works and unsuitable connections from original construction, which allowed repeated train-induced air-pressure loads to loosen the wall.

Emergency works were undertaken to dismantle the affected wall and make the area safe.



Lessons Learnt

- Loose, cracked, displaced or unsupported structural elements must be immediately reported, isolated and assessed by an engineer (Contact Senior Civil Engineer or the Principapl Engineer Track and Civil).
- Changed or unplanned work must be appropriately assessed to identify all hazards. Where new hazards are identified, the SWMS and pre-work brief must be updated, and the work reassessed before commencing.
- Disturbing masonry or concrete can generate respirable crystalline silica; suitable dust suppression, extraction and exclusion controls must be planned and implemented.

Safety must not be compromised due to time pressures; work must be paused until hazards are properly assessed and effective controls are implemented.

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MTS Safety Alert

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Before undertaking work on blockwork, concrete or other structures:

- Stop work, isolate the area and report any loose, cracked, displaced or unsupported structural elements.
- Confirm the work method, asset condition and required engineering controls before disturbing the structure.
- Identify potential silica-containing materials and include dust controls in the SWMS and pre-work brief.
- Use suitable dust suppression or extraction and prevent other workers from entering the exposure area.
- Wear the required respiratory protective equipment for the identified hazard and ensure it has been correctly fit tested, fitted and checked before use.
- Escalate any uncertainty or changed condition to the responsible supervisor or engineer before work continues.

Actions Being Taken

- The affected blockwork wall has been dismantled and the area made safe.
- Inspections of the remaining blockwork walls are being completed to identify any similar defects.
- Work planning and briefing requirements are being reinforced to ensure structural condition, silica hazards and respiratory protection are addressed before work starts.
- Safety-critical corrective actions will be assigned, tracked and verified to confirm they effectively address the underlying causes.
- Silica awareness training will be rolled out to MTS workers across the business whose roles may involve exposure to, or management of, silica-related risks.
- Contractors are to review their internal procedures, SWMS, training and controls to ensure silica exposure risks are identified, communicated and effectively managed before work commences.