

Safety Notice

Catenary hit by a lorry
Lokeren - 26/05/2026

REPORT VERSION TABLE

Version number	Subject of revision	Date
1.0	First version	23/06/2026

For ease of reading, the masculine form is used to refer to certain roles, but these terms apply to all persons.

Any use of this report with a different aim than of accident prevention - for example in order to attribute liability - individual or collective blame in particular - would be a complete distortion of the aims of this notice, the methods used to assemble it, the selection of facts collected, the nature of questions posed and the ideas organising it, to which the notion of liability is unknown. The conclusions which could be deduced from this would therefore be abusive in the literal sense of the term.

In case of contradiction between certain words and terms, it is necessary to refer to the Dutch version.

1. Facts

On 26 May 2026, at around 09:02 a.m., a lorry with a crane jib protruding upwards hits the catenary and a barrier near level crossing 60 on line 59 in Lokeren.

As a result of the collision, the tension to the catenary is cut off and sections of the catenary fall onto the tracks, blocking both tracks between Lokeren and Beervelde. At that moment, an SNCB/NMBS passenger train is approaching level crossing 60, heading towards Lokeren. The train driver performs an emergency braking 96 metres before the level crossing, whilst driving at a speed of 99 km/h. The train passes the level crossing at a speed of approximately 73 km/h, hitting parts of the catenary while passing. About 120 metres in advance of the level crossing, the train comes to a complete standstill.

2. Circumstances of the incident

2.1. Geographical situation

Location: Nieuwe Molenstraat in Lokeren (East Flanders)



2.2. Weather conditions

At the moment of the accident, the weather is dry and visibility is over 200 metres.

3. Infrastructure involved

3.1. Railway infrastructure

Line 59, track B. The reference speed is 140 km/h.

Level crossing 60 is a public level crossing with automatic active signalling with half-barriers.

3.2. Public road infrastructure

The Nieuwe Molenstraat is situated outside of the centre of Lokeren, in a rather mixed neighbourhood comprising both residential buildings and open spaces. The maximum speed limit is 70 km/h. The road consists of one lane in each direction and is used by both local traffic and heavier truck traffic.

On both sides of level crossing 60 there are A41 warning signs indicating the presence of a level crossing with barriers.



Illustration: LC 60 as seen from the direction of travel of the lorry

4. Train involved

The SNCB/NMBS Z658 diesel train runs between Ronse and Lokeren. The passenger train consists of two railcars. There are ten passengers on the train.

5. Damage and impact

5.1. Physical injuries

There are no injuries or fatalities in the accident.

5.2. Material damage to infrastructure

- On the catenary damage has been identified to
 - support cables and contact wire (1);
 - suspension and fixing components such as hangers, clamps and brackets;
 - cables and electrical connections;
 - support constructions and fixing points.
- A barrier needs to be replaced (2)

5.3. Material damage to rolling stock

- Damage to the 1st railcar:
 - The windscreen of driver's cab 2 is scratched (3);
 - The front glass of the destination indicator is broken (4);
 - The coupling (type GF) is damaged (5), as are several electrical cables;
 - The flexible air hoses are damaged;
 - A bracket of the ABS sensor (sensor that measures the rotational speed of the wheels for the braking system) is bent;
 - There is minor lacquer damage to the front (driver's cab) and along the entire right-hand side (as viewed in the direction of travel of train Z658).
- Damage to the 2nd railcar:
 - There is minor lacquer damage on the right-hand side.



Source of
photos:
SNCB/NMBS



5.4. Impact on train traffic

Train traffic remained suspended in both directions until 27 May 2026 at 12:39 p.m.

Train type	Cancelled	Delayed (minutes)
Passenger trains	106	127 (1089)
Freight trains	0	6 (126)
International trains	2	5 (21)

6. Conclusion

The Belgian traffic rules stipulate that the total height of a vehicle, including its load, must not, in principle, exceed 4 metres (except in the case of exceptional transport). Drivers must always observe the specified height restrictions (traffic sign C29) and ensure that their load does not cause any danger or damage. This means that the driver must check the overall dimensions of their vehicle before departure, particularly when driving under bridges, height-restricted gantries or over level crossings with catenaries.

A level crossing is a junction between road and rail traffic. At this location, drivers must take account of the infrastructure in place, such as catenaries, cables and other installations, and height restrictions must be strictly observed.

The contact wire height is standardised at European level in the Technical Specifications for Interoperability relating to the 'energy' subsystem, and is adhered to by the infrastructure manager, Infrabel. The infrastructure manager also sets limit values for the height of the contact wires at the level crossings it manages.

A collision with a catenary or height-restricted gantry can lead to prolonged interruptions in train traffic.

7. Important points to note

- Before departure, check the total height of the vehicle and its load, and ensure that the load and all movable parts are fully lowered or slid in.
- Never drive under a catenary or height-restricted gantry if you are unsure about the clearance height. Stop before the level crossing and choose a safe alternative route.
- In the event of a collision with a level crossing installation, a height-restricted gantry or catenary:
 - Call 1711 immediately (use the location details on the level crossing post) to stop rail traffic.
 - Always consider a catenary as dangerous: it may still be live even after a collision. Keep away and never touch the cables.

Rail Accident and Incident Investigation Unit

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