

Safety Notice

Collision between a train and a road vehicle
on a level crossing
Elsegem - 19/06/2026

REPORT VERSION TABLE

Version number	Subject of revision	Date
1.0	First version	15/07/2026
1.1	Rephrasing of the conclusion to clarify the general safety risk in comparable road environments.	27/07/2026

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

Any use of this notice 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 19 June 2026, at around 05:06 p.m., an SNCB/NMBS passenger train was running from Schaerbeek/Schaarbeek to Kortrijk on railway line 89. The train approached level crossing 96, located in Elsegem.

There was a road vehicle on the tracks at the level crossing. The train driver noticed the vehicle and performed an emergency braking. The available braking distance was insufficient to avoid a collision.

After the collision, the train came to a standstill 100 metres in advance of the level crossing.

2. Circumstances of the event

2.1. Geographical situation

Location: Broekstraat in Elsegem (a sub-municipality of Wortegem-Petegem, East Flanders)



2.2. Weather conditions

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

3. Infrastructure involved

3.1. Railway infrastructure

The accident took place on railway line 89, track A. The reference speed is 120 km/h.

3.2. Road infrastructure



Illustration: Aerial view of level crossing 96. Broekstraat crosses the railway line. Kwadenbult runs alongside the northern side of the railway line, with a western, an eastern and a dead-end branch. (Source: Google Maps)

Broekstraat crosses railway line 89. Broekstraat runs up towards the level crossing from the south. For road users crossing the level crossing from Broekstraat, the junction with Kwadenbulk is immediately after leaving the level crossing.



Illustration: view from Broekstraat towards level crossing 96. The road runs up towards the level crossing. The B17 traffic sign indicates a junction where vehicles approaching from the right have right of way.

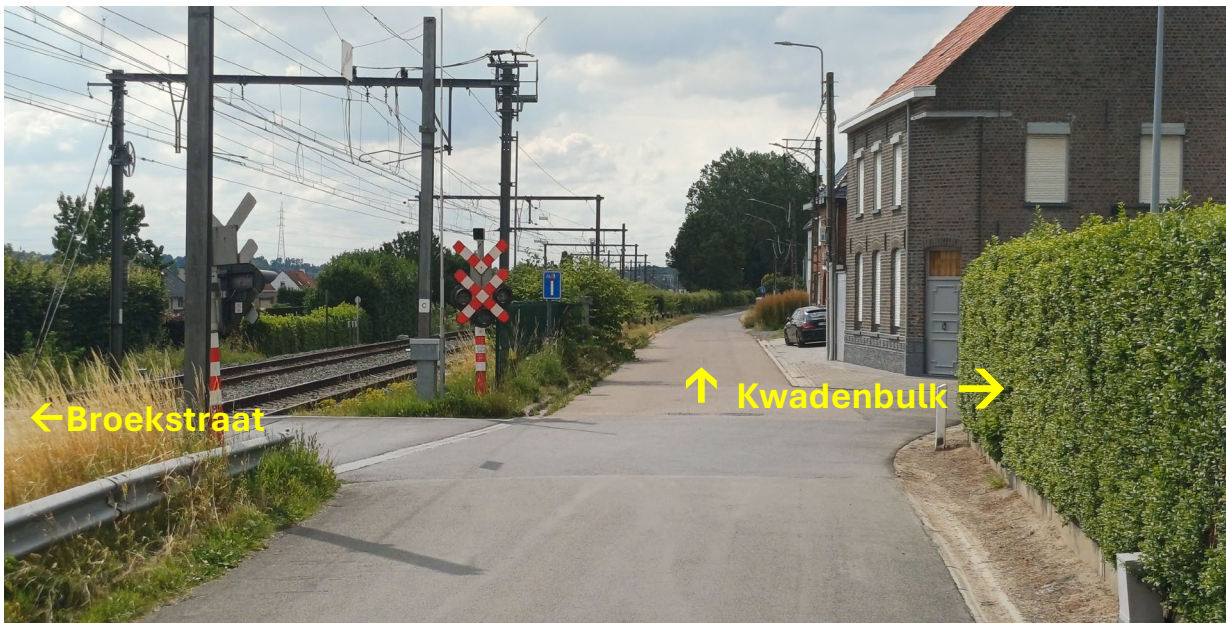


Illustration: view from Kwadenbulk near level crossing 96. Broekstraat joins it on the left. Going straight on, Kwadenbulk comes to a dead end. Kwadenbulk continues to the right.

3.3. Level crossing

Level crossing 96 is a public level crossing with automatic active signalling with half-barriers.

The level crossing is indicated by A41 warning signs on three of the four approaching streets; there is no such sign on the dead-end street.

4. Train involved

SNCB/NMBS passenger train E5137 was running from Schaerbeek/Schaarbeek to Kortrijk. The train consisted of six coupled M7 railcars. There are 75 passengers on board.

5. Damage and impact

5.1. Physical injuries

The driver of the road vehicle was killed in the accident.

5.2. Material damage

As regards the railway infrastructure, a switch is damaged.

Following an inspection, train E5137 is declared in running order.

5.3. Impact on train traffic

Train traffic remained suspended in both directions until 20 June 2026 at 01:17 a.m. This led to the following operational impact:

Train type	Cancelled	Delayed (minutes)
Passenger trains	39	74 (709)
Freight trains	-	-
International trains	-	5 (32)

6. Conclusions

During the inspection carried out following the accident, the Infrabel teams confirmed that the level crossing was functioning correctly.

During the on-site investigation, the investigator from the Investigation Unit observed the presence of an A41 warning sign at every intersecting road (with the exception of the dead-end street) to indicate the level crossing with barriers.

The available information does not allow to establish with certainty why the road vehicle was on the level crossing at the time the train was approaching.

The Investigation Unit does, however, find that the traffic situation in the immediate vicinity of the level crossing is complex.

The combination of a level crossing, a sloping approach, a nearby right-of-way situation and restricted visibility presents a risk factor for road safety.

This traffic situation requires heightened vigilance from road users, who must simultaneously take into account various traffic situations: the level crossing, level crossing signalling, other road traffic, right-of-way rules, and potential traffic congestion just beyond the level crossing.

In the event of traffic congestion or a misjudgment of the traffic situation, there is a risk that the level crossing cannot be fully cleared in time, potentially resulting in a collision with a train.

7. Important points to note

- Only drive onto a level crossing if you are certain you can clear it completely.
- Bear in mind any junctions, right-of-way situations and stationary traffic just beyond the level crossing.
- Always observe the level crossing signalling. Do not drive onto a level crossing once the red lights are flashing, the audible signal is sounding or the barriers are closing.

Rail Accident and Incident Investigation Unit

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