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Investigation underway to explain Bakerloo bulge

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London Underground has launched an investigation after three trains on the Bakerloo line were damaged by a protruding area of tunnel lining.

The incident on Thursday (26 April) resulted in the suspension of services between Piccadilly Circus and Elephant & Castle at 0730 after the top of a train was damaged by a bulge in the tunnel lining near Embankment station. A second train, already in the tunnel, was advised to proceed slowly and also came into contact with the tunnel lining. London Underground said the damage consisted of scrapes to the tops of the trains and broken door indicator lights.

LU's emergency response unit was at the site within six minutes of the incident being reported - although this resulted in scrapes to a third train transporting engineers to the scene. A number of different approaches were tried to eliminate the bulge and following a full repair train services on the affected section of line resumed at 2115.

An investigation is now underway to determine the cause of the tunnel lining bulge. Grouting work had taken place the previous day and this is one avenue being explored with similar grouting work suspended until the investigation has been completed.

LU operations director Nigel Holness said: "London Underground has an excellent safety record and adheres to high standards of maintenance. As a result of the incident last Thursday there is an investigation underway to find out the exact cause."

On Thursday reports of a Bakerloo tunnel collapse and flooding were posted and widely circulated across social media including the Twitter website. These proved inaccurate. "Safety remains our priority and we are confident that the issue has been resolved," said Holness. "The tunnel did not collapse, nor was there any flooding or injuries. We apologise to passengers who faced disruption."

But Tube union RMT accused London Underground of playing down the seriousness of the incident, claiming it was under political pressure to cover up safety failures in the run-up to the London Olympics and this week's Mayoral elections. General secretary Bob Crow said: "It is grossly irresponsible for London Underground to make politically and financially motivated statements about the seriousness of Thursday's incident as it is clear from the pictures that if the buckled tunnel lining had moved another few inches it could have ripped open the train that hit it like a tin can with potentially lethal consequences."

The RMT has called for an independent investigation into LU maintenance arrangements. Crow added: "It was pure luck that the train lights hit the serious tunnel defect and the damage to the train roof shows just how close we came to a disaster."

On the day of the incident RMT members working for Transport for London's Tube Lines subsidiary, including emergency response unit staff, were striking in a dispute over pensions and travel concessions. London Underground said this had not affected the Bakerloo line incident. "The problems are

Bakerloo bulge: an investigation is underway to determine the cause of tunnel lining fault



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not in any way connected with the industrial action taken by some maintenance workers on the Jubilee, Northern and Piccadilly lines which has had no impact since the strike began," added Nigel Holness.

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