

## Commuter trains crash head-on in Vienna



The trains crashed head-on at the height of rush hour EPA

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**David Byers**

Published at 12:01AM, January 22 2013

Dozens of commuters were hurt, five of them seriously, when two commuter trains collided head-on during morning rush hour in Vienna yesterday.

Many of the 41 injured people had to be extracted from the scene using cranes after the crash, which took place in the Penzing district of western Vienna at 8.45am (7.45 GMT). It took almost two hours to evacuate both trains.

A total of 25 fire engines as well as helicopter ambulances were used in the rescue effort.

“Two of the seriously injured are in a life-threatening condition, one of whom is one of the train drivers,” Ronald Packert, an emergency services spokesman, told the AFP news agency.

“In total 41 people were hurt. One good thing was that the crash happened right next to an emergency services station, meaning that our people were there in seconds.”

The crash is being blamed on a technical fault with signalling equipment that caused the trains to travel towards each other along the same track, Austrian Railways said.

“There was a technical problem,” Sarah Nettel, the company spokeswoman, said. “One of the trains received a signal to proceed that it shouldn’t have.”

Last September a train was derailed in the same area without causing any injuries. An inquiry blamed human error for the incident after a rail worker switched a point the wrong way.

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