

Moment a terrified maintenance worker leaped from a 39 TONNE runaway train before it raced through a busy station after its brakes failed

- Underground maintenance unit was out of control for 16 minutes in 2011
- Train was being towed but broke free close to Highgate in north London
- Unit came within 600 metres of a packed commuter Tube train near Archway
- Eventually stopped near Warren Street after Tube workers tried to derail it
- London Underground and two contractors were fined £300,000 yesterday

By [Steve Nolan](#), [Mark Duell](#) and [Anthony Bond](#)

PUBLISHED: 18:14, 28 February 2013 | **UPDATED:** 10:57, 1 March 2013

This is the dramatic moment a Tube worker jumped to safety from an out of control 39-tonne train as it careered dangerously through central London.

The maintenance worker can be seen jumping off the 66ft-long maintenance unit at Highgate tube station after its brakes failed during one of the busiest times of the day.

As the train hurtles at speed along the Northern Line, the worker runs along the track beside it. Realising he has little chance of being able to stop the train, he places his hands on his head in panic.

Bemused commuters can be seen waiting on a packed platform at Archway station as the train hurtles past them at speed. A court heard yesterday how the runaway train came within 600 metres of causing a 'terrible tragedy' as it headed towards a passenger train.

SCROLL DOWN FOR VIDEO



Worrying: This is the dramatic moment a Tube worker jumps off a 39-tonne runaway train as it careered dangerously through Highgate station in north London



Dangerous: The man can be seen jumping to safety on the platform as the 66ft-long maintenance unit tore along the Northern Line after its brakes failed



Panic: The Tube worker is clearly worried about the out of control train as it hurtled towards Archway station



Out of control: The man puts his head on his hands as the train hurtles through the underground

London Underground and its contractors were yesterday fined £300,000 at the Old Bailey over the incident in August 2011.

It was being towed past Highgate station in north London but broke free from the other train, passing through seven stations as it raced along the line for 16 minutes, causing a 'substantial risk of harm'.

At one point, a busy commuter train in front of the runaway was collecting passengers at Archway in north London and control room staff told the driver to close his doors and urgently accelerate away.


The driver was told not to stop and told passengers over the tannoy to move towards the front of the train. The control panel showed the runaway gaining on the passenger train at one stage.



Concern: Commuters waiting during the busy rush hour period at Archway station look on in bemusement as the out of control train hurtles past them



Awful: A court heard yesterday how the runaway train came within 2,000ft of causing a 'terrible tragedy' after tearing along four miles of track



One worker described them as 'bloody close'. The two trains came within 2,000ft of each another and Underground staff could not derail the unit between Camden Town and Mornington Crescent.

But they managed to reduce its speed and with bemused commuters watching from the platform as the unit rolled passed them, it slowly ground to a halt on a slight incline towards Warren Street.

It then began rolling backwards stopping at the entrance to the tunnel, the court was told.

Prosecutor Jonathan Ashley-Norman for the Office of Rail Regulation said: 'It's a case that concerns a runaway of a train on the Northern Tube line. It could have been a terrible tragedy.'



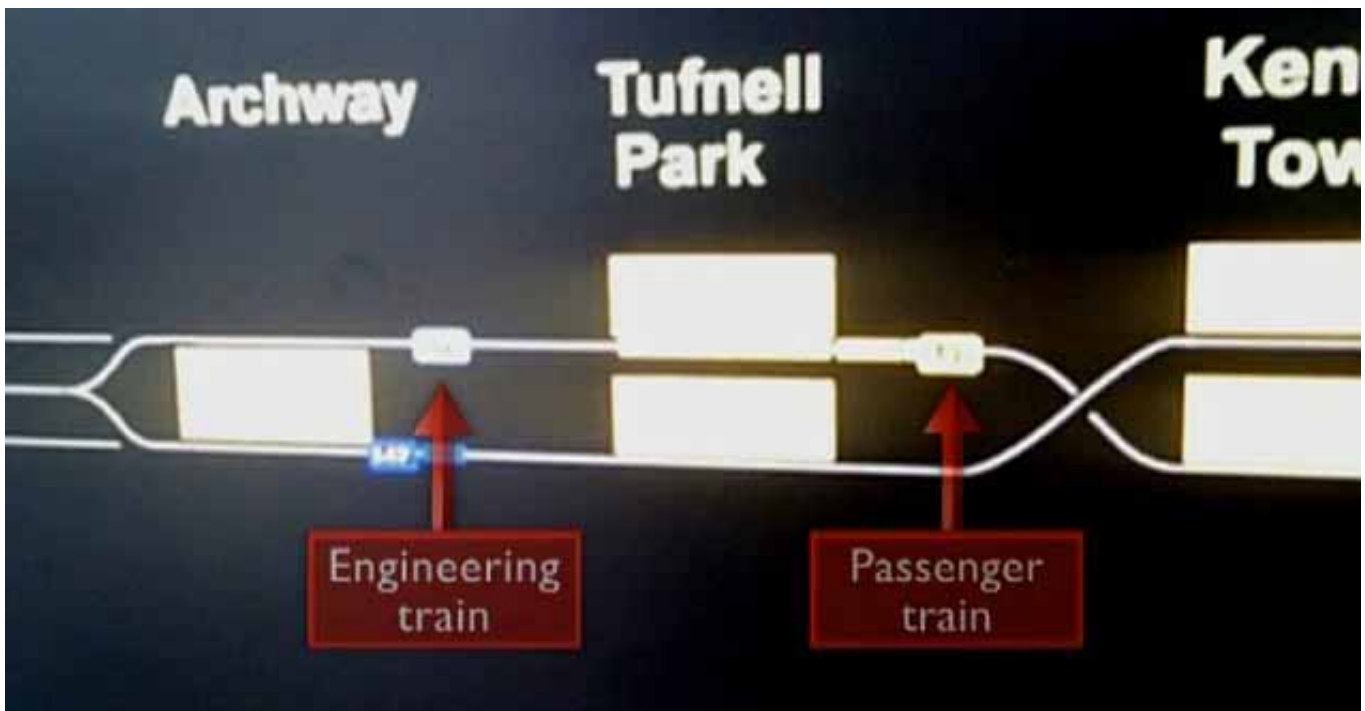
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Runaway train: The 66ft-long maintenance unit that ran out of control for 16 minutes in August 2011



© Alamy

Incident: A busy commuter train in front of the runaway was collecting passengers at Archway (pictured) in north London and control room staff told the driver to close his doors and urgently accelerate away



Frightening: This image from the underground control room shows how close the out of control train came to a passenger train which had left Tufnell Park station

'Thanks to the skilled actions of London Underground staff in the immediate aftermath of the incident no-one was hurt. However operatives and passengers were exposed to a substantial risk of harm.'

He told the Old Bailey that the broken down unit came loose as it was being towed uphill past Highgate station at 6.35am on August 13, 2011. A defective coupling on the unit came loose and because the unit had no power it couldn't brake.



In court: London Underground has been fined over the incident along with two of its contractors

Two members of staff from a German contractor on board the unit had to jump to safety onto a platform as the unit rolled backwards downhill through Highgate station picking up speeds of up to 30mph.

London Underground, maintenance provider Tube Lines and the German operator of the unit Schweerbau admitted health and safety breaches. The three firms were each fined £100,000.

Judge Richard Hone QC said: 'The rail grinding unit was out of control for a total of 16 minutes over a distance of four miles. But to those involved it must have seemed like an extremely frightening eternity.'

'Each of the three corporate defendants who have pleaded guilty played relevant roles in causing this full scale emergency. Staff and passengers were put at high risk of injury or death.'

He added: 'In short, that risk had not been properly assessed.'

The judge said he had reduced the fines from £150,000 to take account of the firms' co-operation with investigators from the Office of Rail Regulation.

They had also put in place measures to ensure the incident would never be repeated. Each company was also ordered to pay £14,691 costs to the Office of Rail Regulation.

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So who was filming the onboard video footage? HE is the real hero ;) - Nick Clogg, Amsterdam, 1/3/2013 10:31***** It's likely to have been a very heroic automatic camera.

- [troll](#) , under a bridge, United Kingdom, 01/3/2013 12:19

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Why did the man who jumped from it, slam the brakes on, or steer it to another track? He should be charged with dangerous driving etc. Bet he was on his mobile phone. - cosa200, gloucester, United Kingd Why did you not bother to read the article before commenting. He was a maintenance worker and not a superhero. The trains driver was told not to stop.

- [RachJ81](#) , peterborough, 01/3/2013 12:18

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Oh bless him! What else could he do? That cab cam is blimmin scary though!

- [troll](#) , under a bridge, United Kingdom, 01/3/2013 12:14

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Robineff, hampshire - Tonne is 1000kg and is quite correct. It's metric - where have you been for the last 30 years?

- [David](#) , Pwllheli, United Kingdom, 01/3/2013 12:12

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Just be thankful it was no more serious than a roll to a stop, I remember the crash at Aldgate.

- [Lionel70](#) , Macclesfield, United Kingdom, 01/3/2013 12:11

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His stomach must have turned over a few times!

- [Gaz](#) , Manchester, 01/3/2013 12:09

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Why did the man who jumped from it, slam the brakes on, or steer it to another track? He should be charged with dangerous driving etc. Bet he was on his mobile phone. - cosa200, gloucester, United Kingdom, 01/03/2013 09:49 Why are you so stupid?!

- [Well isn't that just great!](#) , uk, 01/3/2013 12:08

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Beneath the photo your (DM) caption says: "Out of control: The man puts his head on his hands as the train hurtles through the underground."Erm... I think you'll find he put his hands on his head.

- [Kouros](#) , Hampshire, United Kingdom, 01/3/2013 12:06

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- honi soit que mal y pense , Avalon, 01/3/2013 11:00*****Would you care to explain? Are you happy with the modern "lazy" English?

- [Patrick](#) , Belfast, 01/3/2013 12:04

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Why did the man who jumped from it, slam the brakes on, or steer it to another track? He should be charged with dangerous driving etc. Bet he was on his mobile phone. - cosa200, gloucester, United Kingdom, 1/3/2013 9:49 Steer a train? That has got to be the 'D'oh' comment of the day! *facepalm*

- [Missing Link](#) , Dunbartonshire, 01/3/2013 11:59

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