

Safety Alert

Corrosion of flange plated lighting columns

11 February 2026

Background information

- A bridge deck steel lighting column collapsed due to internal corrosion. Fortunately, no harm was caused. A further 108 corroded columns have been subsequently removed from the bridge deck.
- The flange plated columns were circa 10m high, 3mm steel wall thickness, 29 years old and located in an exposed aggressive environment. The 2023 visual inspection recommended that the columns should be prioritised and considered for replacement based on age. Non-destructive testing was not undertaken.
- There have been several recent near misses due to internal corrosion (above/near the weld) of steel flange plated lighting columns. See alerts ([HEi137](#) & [NHa354](#)).
- Robust non-destructive testing and assessment is essential to manage end of service life lighting columns.
- Advanced service life, signs of water ingress and corrosion initiation are all indicators for more frequent inspection and testing. Suspect installations should be removed particularly for thin-walled installations that may not have significant reserve capacity.
- Non-destructive testing (NDT) guidance is available within [ATOMS](#). Strength testing would give short term assurance of asset condition, hammer testing and ultrasonic thickness readings would likely identify the presence and extent of corrosion.
- Holding down arrangements should be checked as part of visual inspection and testing regime particularly when mild steel and showing signs of corrosion.



Lessons Learnt

Lighting/Structures Engineering Team Managers shall :-

- Ensure that all flange plate columns have been subject to appropriate non-destructive testing.
- At risk columns shall be removed from the network.
- Columns where corrosion is initiated (amber rating) shall be identified and placed in a forward programme for removal / replacement. Where funding is not available consideration shall be given to pre-emptive asset removal subject to risk assessment.

NHa366

If you have any queries about this safety alert information announcement or any other safety announcement then please contact stephen.dennis@nationalhighways.co.uk