

Man Dies on Tube Tracks After Safety Failures During Police Search

July 30, 2025

— Categories: General News



A man who fled from police was electrocuted and then fatally struck by a London Underground train during a search operation, an inquest has heard. The incident has drawn strong criticism from a coroner, who described Transport for London's (TfL) response as "inadequate" and flagged serious safety oversights.

Robert English, 32, died in the early hours of 19 May 2024 after walking onto the tracks near Colindale station in north London. Police had been called after reports of a fight; English was last seen just after 1 am when two officers attempted to contain, but not restrain, him. He walked away and entered the track area unnoticed.

The inquest heard that TfL staff initially cut the power but restored it after being mistakenly informed that English had climbed a fence and left the railway area. A train that had been held stationary was then permitted to move; while searching the track, it ran over English about 400–600 metres from the station. He had already been electrocuted by that time.

Senior Coroner Andrew Walker identified communication and procedural failures, stating the train dispatched was not adequately equipped for searching in darkness and that essential steps, such as verifying English's location—were omitted before power was restored.

Mr Walker wrote: "It is likely that had this step been followed, the power supply would not have been switched on and a proper search ... is likely to have found Mr English and returned him safely to the station."

The Independent Office for Police Conduct concluded in June that a formal investigation into police conduct was unnecessary, though the case has reignited concerns about safety on the Underground network.

Claire Mann, TfL's Chief Operating Officer, offered condolences to English's family and said the organisation had conducted a formal internal investigation. "We are thoroughly reviewing the coroner's Prevention of Future Deaths report before responding in full," she said.

A Department for Transport spokesperson said the government was also reviewing the report's findings.

This case follows earlier calls for TfL to improve safety practices after a passenger's death on the tracks, raising broader questions about whether sufficient measures are in place to prevent avoidable deaths across London's transport network.