GB Rail Safety Performance and Trends for 2014

RSSB has published its high-level Overview of Safety Performance for the calendar year 2014. The performance should be viewed against an overall context of increasing passenger journeys, with levels having increased by more than 50% in the last 10 years.

George Bearfield, Director of System Safety at RSSB said ‘Against continual growth in usage our railway remains the safest form of land transport. The risk associated with train accidents resulting in passenger and workforce fatalities remains low, with no such accidents occurring for the seventh consecutive year. Improving level crossing safety continues to be a major focus for the industry to manage and it continues to raise awareness of the sources of risks and encourage responsible behaviour’.

‘Road transport plays a crucial role in keeping the railway running, by enabling round-the-clock maintenance and development. However, this brings with it a risk to rail staff and others, highlighted by the loss of life to an infrastructure worker who was moving materials from one railway worksite to another. A cross-industry project is underway to highlight the wider risks associated with driving for work and improve overall understanding and management’.

‘Whilst there can never be zero risk, there is no room for complacency and active prevention, monitoring, and learning all play a role’.

The headlines are:

- For the 7th year in succession, there were no passenger or workforce fatalities in train accidents.
- Excluding trespass and suicide, the total number of fatalities in 2014 was 17, compared with 18 in 2013.
- Three of the fatalities were passengers, compared with six in 2013; all occurred at stations. Three members of the workforce were fatally injured in 2014; two were fatally injured in 2013. Excluding trespass and suicide, 11 members of the public were fatally injured, compared with 10 in 2013.
• The number of potentially higher-risk train accidents (PHRTAs) in 2014 was 32, compared with 30 occurring in 2013.

• At 292, the number of signals passed at danger (SPADs) in 2014 was a 2% increase on the 285 recorded in 2013. SPAD risk rose to 84% mid-year, before reducing and ending 2014 at 61% of the September 2006 baseline level. This compares with 70% at the end of 2013.

• Fatalities arising from trespass and suicide totalled 320 in 2014, compared with 315 in 2013. 2014 was the third consecutive year the total number increased.

-Ends-

For further information, please contact RSSB’s press office on 020 3142 5331/2 or email pressoffice@rssb.co.uk or visit the website at www.rssb.co.uk

Notes to Editors:

Passengers
• On 1 March, a through train struck a person who had fallen on the track at Shepherd’s Bush station. Alcohol was reported as a potential factor in the event.
• On 7 April, a teenage child fell from the platform and onto the track and was electrocuted at Horley station. Alcohol was reported as a potential factor in the event.
• On 5 August, a person running for a train fell down the stairs at Hampstead Heath station. He was taken to hospital but died from his injuries five days later.

Workforce
• On 22 January, a lookout working with a small gang carrying out inspection work on the track outside Newark Northgate station was struck by a train approaching the station.
• On 1 May, an infrastructure worker driving a tractor on the A7 north of Galashiels was involved in a road traffic accident with a lorry.
• On 24 May, a train cleaner working at West Marina Depot came into contact with the live rail and was electrocuted.

Members of the public
• Two people died when their motor vehicles were struck by trains at level crossings.
• Eight pedestrian users of level crossings died as a result of being struck by trains.
• A child died after being struck by a train during an incident where his mother is believed to have accessed the track to commit suicide.

In 2014 a single road traffic collision tragically killed a number of off-duty staff. This is recognised as a risk by the cross-industry Road Driving Risk project, but out of scope of this report.