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## **GB railway safety 2009-10 Another year of sustained safety performance**

RSSB has published its Annual Safety Performance Report (ASPR) for the financial year 2009/10. The headlines are:

- On the basis of fatality risk per traveller kilometre, rail travel is nearly 1,500 times safer than travelling by motorcycle, over 500 times safer than walking, over 400 times safer than cycling, over 30 times safer than travelling by car and around 3 times safer than using a bus or coach.
- It's estimated that there were about 1.25 billion passenger journeys made in the last financial year, but there were no passenger or workforce fatalities in train accidents in 2009/10. This is the fourth financial year in the last five with no such fatalities.
- 2009/10 saw the lowest financial year total on record for category A signals passed at danger, which stood at 277. This is a decrease of 15 on the number recorded for 2008/09. There has been a substantial overall reduction in SPAD risk and train accident risk over the last decade. An analysis of trends in train accident precursors using the Precursor Indicator Model (PIM) shows the overall risk at 39% of March 2002 baseline level, compared to 46% at the end of 2008/09.
- There were 42 potentially higher-risk train accidents (PHRTAs). This is 6 lower than for 2008/09, and the lowest number recorded.
- The total level of harm in 2009/10 was the same as 2008/09, 129.7 FWI (fatalities and weighted injuries).
- Five passengers died in separate incidents, all at stations. This is the same figure for 2008/09, and remains the lowest passenger fatality total recorded for either a calendar or financial year.
- Three members of the workforce died in accidents during 2009/10, all were working on the infrastructure. The overall level of workforce harm was 24.5 FWI which is a 6% reduction on the 2008/09 figure, and a 4% reduction when normalised by hours worked.

- Twelve members of the public died while using level crossings; the same number for 2008/09. Six were pedestrians, one was a cyclist, and five were road vehicle occupants, three of whom died in the same vehicle at an accident in Halkirk. While the number of fatalities is the same as 2008/09, the number of train collisions with road vehicles dropped from 21 in 2008/09 to 14.
- A further 49 members of the public were killed while trespassing; this is an increase of five on 2008/09.

Anson Jack, Director of Policy, Research and Risk at RSSB said:

‘Over the last 10 years, the industry has been able to effect the biggest safety improvements in areas where it has direct control and responsibility – particularly the risk from train accidents and more generally the overall risk to passengers and members of the workforce. Nobody is complacent – the human element and the nature of railway operations means that we can’t have zero risk, but the whole industry – whether that’s Network Rail or a train operator – front line staff or senior management - are resolute in their commitment to safety.’

Anson continued:

‘These positive safety trends together with high levels of customer satisfaction, reliability and resilience, put the rail industry in a good position to support the agenda for cost-effective green transport. In the light of the Department for Transport and Office of Rail Regulation’s Value for Money study, the report we’re publishing also highlights how, through cooperation and the use of quality data, the industry can improve safety and business performance while driving out unnecessary cost.’

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For further information, please contact the RSSB press office, on 020 3142 5331/ 5332 or email [pressoffice@rssb.co.uk](mailto:pressoffice@rssb.co.uk) or visit the website on [www.rssb.co.uk](http://www.rssb.co.uk)

## Notes to editors:

1. Working with our partners RSSB's purpose is to help the industry to:
  - Continuously improve the level of safety in the rail industry where reasonably practicable
  - Drive out unnecessary cost
  - Improve business performance
2. RSSB supports the industry in managing system safety through an auditable trail from data to taking decisions affecting safety. The data side includes the collection, analysis and sharing of information about safety related events – including analysis through the Safety Management Information System (SMIS) and publications such as the Annual Safety Performance Report . It also includes the development of the industry's Safety Risk Model which identifies all significant risks affecting the system, and a Precursor Indicator Model that looks specifically at the risk from train accidents, and the SPAD risk ranking methodology, which looks specifically at the risk from signals passed at danger.
3. The Annual Safety Performance Report 2009/10, compiled and published by RSSB on behalf of the industry, covers the financial year from 01 April 2009 to 31 March 2010 and chronicles safety performance on the national rail network. This is generally limited to events on or affecting stations and Network Rail Managed Infrastructure. However, fatal accidents occurring to railway employees away from these locations, but during working time are also included.
4. Recent reports have been on a calendar year basis, but RSSB has returned to financial years for consistency with other major rail industry matters – particularly those associated with planning including Control Period 4, its associated High Level Output Specification (HLOS), and the Railway Strategic Safety Plan (SSP), all of which cover the period April 2009 to March 2014 as five financial years.
5. A copy of the report can be found on RSSB's website at:  
<http://www.rssb.co.uk/spr/reports/pages/default.aspx>
6. The report reviews the rail industry's safety performance and assesses performance against the trajectories for the key risk areas outlined in the Railway Strategic Safety Plan 2009-14. These include risks to passengers, workforce and the public and take account of station environments, trains, trackside, engineering, level crossings and crime. It benchmarks rail safety in Britain against other transport modes and overseas railways, describes the safety performance in relation to the European Common Safety Indicators (CSIs) and compares safety performance with National Reference Values (NRVs) relating to the first set of European Common Safety Targets (CSTs), as defined by the European Railway Agency. The report also monitors industry progress on the targets for improvement relating to passenger and workforce risk, which have been defined by the Government through the High Level Output Specification (HLOS).
7. RSSB manages a number of national programmes that bring together experts from the industry and external agencies to analyse and identify ways to reduce risk, and supports train operators and Network Rail with their safety management responsibilities. This includes a programme on operational safety through the Operations Focus Group (OFG). It helps monitor industry performance in relation to operational safety – which includes issues such as SPADs - and recommends changes to priorities and strategies –

which includes supporting effective campaigns – including the ‘RED’ series - and sponsoring relevant research and development as a client group.

8. RSSB manages the rail industry’s research and development, which is funded by the Department for Transport. Research into railway operations has helped boost the industry’s knowledge base on key risk areas including SPADs, safety critical communications and abnormal and degraded working. Engineering research has investigated a wide range of options for improving the crashworthiness of rolling stock and increasing survivability – including the benefits of all-laminated glass to contain passengers. Research into management aspects of the railway have ensured high level safety decision making is grounded in an up-to-date understanding of risk, and helped inform modern approaches to competence management and workforce development.
9. Individual rail companies are ultimately responsible for the delivery of appropriate levels of safety in keeping with their safety management system (SMS). However, because there are many companies, safe operation is supported by agreed interface standards. These are known as Railway Group Standards (RGSs) and are managed on behalf of the industry by RSSB. They cover engineering and operations interfaces and include the national Rule Book. Changes to RGSs are informed by a combination of operational experience, data analysis, and research and development.
10. Fatalities and weighted injuries is the measure used by the industry to take account of major and minor injuries in the overall level of risk on the railway. Details of the injury weightings used can be found within the document *Taking Safe Decisions*. This is the industry consensus view of how decisions should be taken that properly protect the safety of rail industry staff, passengers and others, satisfy the law and respect the interests of stakeholders, whilst remaining commercially sound. See <http://www.rssb.co.uk/safety/Pages/safetydecisionmaking.aspx>