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Growing rail industry sees safety performance move even further ahead

Record numbers of passengers and freight are being carried by rail, and the latest industry figures suggest that the people who use and work on the railway are benefiting from even higher levels of safety.

The national rail network was already seeing the highest number of passenger-kilometres travelled since the 1920s, but recent trends suggest that will be surpassed in 2011-12. At the same time, industry's mainline railway safety record has been even further enhanced, in the latest high-level summary figures published by RSSB in the *Overview of safety performance for 2011*.

This means that, rather than increasing in line with growth, the overall number of incidents and levels of harm passengers, public and workforce experience is actually decreasing, as it has been for a number of years.

The headlines

- For the fourth year in succession, there were no passenger or workforce fatalities in train accidents.
- Three passengers died in separate incidents at stations. This is the lowest number of passenger fatalities recorded in a calendar year.
- One member of the workforce was fatally injured (in a road traffic accident), compared with three in 2010.
- The number of incidents that could have developed into worse scenarios (known as potentially higher risk train accidents or PHRTAs) in 2011 was 28, compared with 25 occurring in 2010. The past two years have seen significantly lower numbers of PHRTAs than previous years.
- At 283, the number of category A signals passed at danger (SPADs) for 2011 was lower than the 306 occurring in 2010. There was a significant reduction in the risk from SPADS, as at the end of 2011 the risk was at 41% of the September 2006 baseline level, compared with 86% at the end of 2010.



- At eight, the total number of fatalities occurring to members of the public, and not involving trespass or suicide, was equal to 2010. Six of the fatalities occurred at level crossings, also the same number as the previous year.
- Fatalities arising from trespass and suicide totalled 261 in 2011, compared to 259 in 2010.

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

‘Trains continue to prove themselves a far safer mode of transport than cars, and the latest performance figures show rail’s natural ‘safety conscience’ continues to pay dividends to passengers, workforce and public alike.’

‘There remain challenging issues – especially at level crossings and at the platform edge - and industry continues to explore opportunities to reduce risks in these areas.’

‘This is an exciting time for rail in Britain, with substantial government support for investment in both the existing national infrastructure, and new projects like High Speed 2, and others that will bear fruit sooner, such as Thameslink and Crossrail. While rail is proving more popular and safe than ever before, the challenge remains to deliver these with better value for money for taxpayers and rail users.’

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For further information, please contact the RSSB press office, on 020 3142 5331/ 5332 or email pressoffice@rssb.co.uk or visit the website on 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
 - Drive out unnecessary cost
 - Improve business performance
2. The *Overview of safety performance for 2011*, is compiled and published by RSSB on behalf of the industry, and covers the calendar year from January to December and provides the key highlights of safety performance on the national rail network.

3. A more detailed assessment of the industry's safety performance in the financial year 2011-12 will be presented in the Annual Safety Performance Report (ASPR), to be released later in the year.
4. A copy of the 2011 report can be found on RSSB's website at <http://www.rssb.co.uk/SPR/REPORTS/Documents/Overview%202011%20-%20final.pdf>
5. Statistics about the growth in use of rail by passengers and freight are collated by the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) and can be found on its website at <http://www.rail-reg.gov.uk/server/show/nav.2026>
6. Other supporting information:

Fatalities

Two passengers struck by trains were at Clapham Junction station on 3 August 2011 and Liverpool James Street station on 22 October 2011. The person who died as the result of a fall was at Canterbury West station on 24 March 2011.

The infrastructure worker died following a road traffic accident at Kingussie on 4 July 2011.

The motorcyclist died at Balderton level crossing in Cheshire on 26 July 2011.

The five pedestrians struck by trains on level crossings were at:

- Morris Hill level crossing near Cheltenham Spa on 19 January 2011.
- Sharpenhurst No.3 level crossing at Christ's Hospital, West Sussex on 14 February 2011.
- Gypsy Lane level crossing at Needham Market, Suffolk on 24 August 2011.
- Branston footpath crossing at Burton-on-Trent (Staffs) on 9 September 2011.
- Mexico footpath crossing at Penzance on 3 October 2011.

Two members of the public struck by trains near the platform edge were at Hayes & Harlington station on 19 July 2011 and Urmston, Manchester on 30 September 2011.

SPAD Risk Ranking

SPADs are ranked and analysed in terms of the potential risk they represent.

This process fulfils the purpose of providing a consistent and objective measure of assessing changing trends in SPAD risk on a system-wide basis.