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Railway Safety Performance Headlines for 2008 Highlighted

Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) has published an *Overview of safety performance for 2008*, to provide the industry with some initial indications of trends in risk.

The report provides the rail industry with a concise synopsis of the key safety indicators and trends for 2008, ahead of the more comprehensive analysis in the Annual Safety Performance Report (ASPR) to be published in April.

The headlines from 2008 were:

- There were no passenger or workforce fatalities in train accidents - the third year in the last four with no fatalities.
- Five passengers died in separate accidents; two on level crossings at stations, and three at other station locations. This is the lowest passenger fatality total ever recorded.
- Three members of the workforce died in accidents compared with two in 2007.
- At 53, the number of potentially high-risk train accidents (PHRTAs) was 13% above 2007. This was largely due to an increase in trains striking vehicles at level crossings.
- At 327, the number of category A signals passed at danger (SPADs) was 3% higher than the 318 occurring in 2007, with the level of SPAD risk standing at 15% of the March 2001 baseline.
- There were two fatalities involving road vehicle occupants at level crossings, compared with four recorded in 2007. In 2007, one event was a suspected suicide.
- Thirteen pedestrians died at level crossings, an increase of four from 2007.
- Fatalities arising from trespass and suicide were 258 in 2008 compared to 249 in 2007.

Anson Jack, Director of Policy, Research and Risk said: 'Looking at the big picture, the emerging results are very positive – rail continues to be a very



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safe form of public transport, with safety improvements seen in several areas. The industry remains committed through individual company actions and cooperative planning to bring about further progress in the reduction of risk wherever reasonably practicable. It also recognises the risk imported onto its infrastructure by public behaviour and continues to address this with campaigns of education, enforcement and risk mitigation.'

A more detailed assessment of the industry's safety performance in 2008 will be presented in the ASPR, to be released in April 2009. The ASPR demonstrates industry progress on the trajectories established in the industry's strategic safety plan for 2008-10.

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For further information, please contact the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) press office, on 020 7904 7524 / 7525 / 7593 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 2008*, 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. A more detailed assessment of the industry's safety performance in 2008 will be presented in the ASPR, to be released in April 2009.
3. A copy of the report can be found on RSSB's website at <http://www.rssb.co.uk/safety/spr/spreports.asp>