

1 May 2009

## GB Railway Safety Performance and Trends in 2008

RSSB has published its Annual Safety Performance Report for 2008. The headlines are:

- There were no passenger or workforce fatalities in train accidents in 2008. This is the third year in the last four with no fatalities.
- In 2008, 70 accidental fatalities, 422 major injuries and 12,308 minor injuries (including shock and trauma) were recorded. The total level of harm in 2008 was 132.1 Fatalities and Weighted Injuries (FWI). This is 2% higher than 2007.
- Five passengers died in separate incidents – all at stations. This is the lowest passenger fatality total recorded. The fatality rate per passenger journey is also at an historically low level.
- There were 47 potentially higher-risk train accidents (PHRTAs). This is the same as the 2007 total and similar to the average for the previous three years.
- There were small increases in both the number of SPADs and the predicted level of risk from SPADs during 2008. However, the underlying level of risk remains historically low at around 15% of its March 2001 level, compared to 13% at the end of 2007.
- Three members of the workforce died in accidents during 2008: two track workers and one other member of staff. This compares with two workforce fatalities in both 2007 and 2006.
- Twelve pedestrians died at level crossings in 2008, compared with nine in 2007. This is the highest number of pedestrian fatalities since 1997 (when there were also twelve).
- There were two accidental fatalities involving road vehicle occupants at level crossings. This is comparable with levels seen over the previous three years.
- Fatalities from suicide (209) and trespass (47) totalled 256. This is similar to the average for the previous three years.

Anson Jack, Director of Policy, Research and Risk at RSSB said: 'Against a backdrop of increased passenger numbers and freight traffic using the railways, RSSB's report



shows the industry maintaining a consistent or improving trend in the majority of key risk areas. The railway is a very safe means of transport and the industry which delivers it remains focused on understanding the causes of those risks that do arise and introducing measures that will lead to reduce them.

'In the area of risk at level crossings, which saw an increase in fatalities, we are reminded of the importance of public behaviour and the industry continues to work with local authorities, British Transport Police and within the community to educate the public and enforce the local rules.'

**-Ends-**

For further information, please contact RSSB's press office, on 020 3142 5330/1/2 or email [pressoffice@rssb.co.uk](mailto:pressoffice@rssb.co.uk) or visit the website at [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. The Annual Safety Performance Report 2008, compiled and published by RSSB on behalf of the industry, covers the calendar year from January to December 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.
3. A copy of the report can be found on RSSB's website at <http://www.rssb.co.uk/safety/spr/spreports.asp>
4. 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 2008-10. These include risks to passengers, workforce and the public and take account of station environments, on trains, trackside, engineering, level crossings and crime.

It benchmarks rail safety in Britain against other transport modes and overseas railways, reviews the way the industry learns from accidents, describes the safety



performance in relation to the European Common Safety Indicators (CSIs) and outlines what the National Reference Values (NRVs) relating to the first set of European Common Safety Targets (CSTs), will look like for Great Britain.

5. 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. RSSB manages an industry Research and Development programme, which supports these activities.
6. 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 at within the document *Taking Safe Decisions* which has been endorsed by the industry. See [http://www.rssb.co.uk/safety/safety\\_strategies/sdmoukr.asp](http://www.rssb.co.uk/safety/safety_strategies/sdmoukr.asp)
7. Behind the headlines:

Since 1990, there has been a significant long-term reduction in the rate of fatal train accidents.

Because serious train accidents are rare, RSSB also analyses trends in precursors and their associated risk. This analysis shows that the underlying risk from train accidents was relatively static over the year, consolidating improvements seen earlier in the decade.

Collisions at level crossings account for 36% of all train accident risk. The number of collisions between trains and road vehicles in 2008 rose to 19 from 11 in 2007.

On the basis of fatality risk per passenger kilometre, rail travel is more than 1,100 times safer than travelling by motorcycle, around 300 times safer than cycling or walking, more than 20 times safer than travelling by car and three times safer than using a bus or coach.