



23 February 2017

10 years after Grayrigg, rail passengers are safer than ever

Ten years have passed since the last train accident killed passengers or rail staff on Britain's mainline railways, which is unprecedented in their history, according to rail industry body RSSB.

The accident at Grayrigg 10 years ago on 23 February 2007 was the last time a passenger died in a train accident scenario such as a derailment or collision. In comparison, five people die on Britain's roads every day.

Detailed analysis by RSSB shows that rail passengers genuinely are safer, with train accident fatality risk falling 87% since the year 2000, as both accidents and their causes, such as trains passing red signals, are at an all-time low.

RSSB has also looked at incidents which have most potential to turn into more serious accidents including trains striking objects and derailments, and these too are falling, with just 17 incidents in 2016 compared to 45 in 2007.

Lives were also saved 10 years ago at Grayrigg thanks to the train's crashworthiness and the use of laminated glass in the windows. Research shows these prevent people from being ejected from the train.

Without a major accident, it has been easier for industry to maintain constant scrutiny and analysis of data and sustain a focus on where risk needs to be managed, such as at level crossings and the platform-train interface on stations.

The rail industry now shares a corporate memory built on many decades of operational experience, says RSSB in its latest industry learning report.

RSSB's Director of System Safety, George Bearfield said:

'This unprecedented 10-year respite does not, of course, mean that train accidents are consigned to history. It's still possible for accidents involving trains, or vehicles like trains, to happen, as shown elsewhere. We have seen major accidents overseas in recent months, and



also the major tram incident in Croydon in November last year. The railways' safety performance is maintained through continual learning and industry is ready to learn any relevant transferable lessons for the mainline railway in Britain.

'By remaining vigilant and avoiding complacency, the railways have maintained a methodical and targeted approach to managing risk and improving safety. Stronger trains, better signalling and protection, and day-to-day dedication of rail staff have all played their part too.

'Train accidents have a tragic impact on passengers, rail staff, and their families – the derailment at Grayrigg resulted in tragedy for the family of Margaret Masson who died. It also required heroism from rail staff, emergency services and the local community in the aftermath. Our thoughts are with them as much as they are with the progress we've made as an industry in the intervening period.'

-Ends-

Notes to Editors:

The data charts are available as high resolution image files.

George Bearfield, Director of System Safety, is available for interview on Wednesday afternoon.

For further information, please contact:

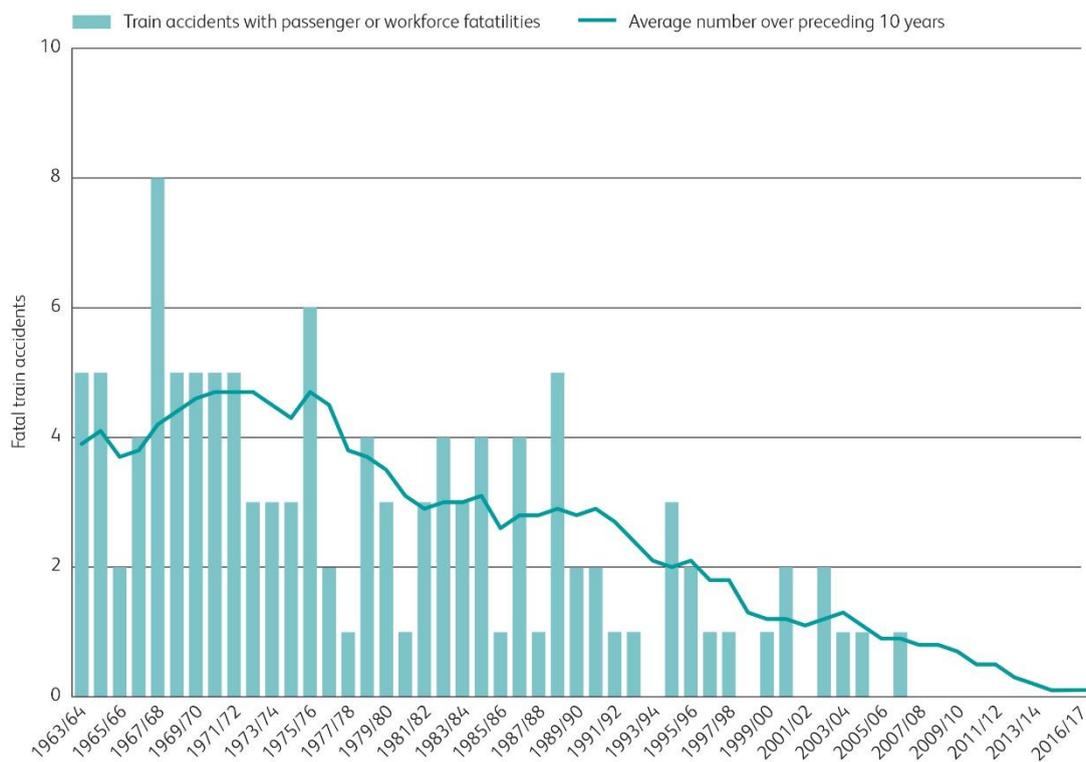
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Train accidents with passenger or workforce fatalities

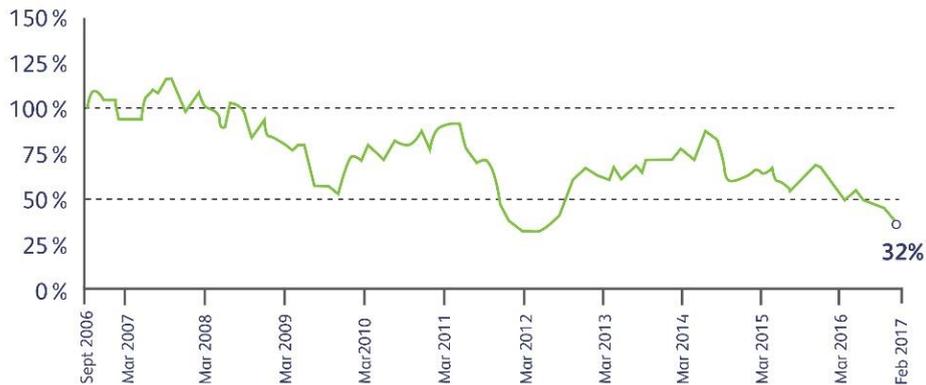
Number of train accidents where passengers or rail staff lost their lives	
1967-1977	45
1977-1987	28
1987-1997	18
1997-2007	9
2007-2017 (up until 23 February)	0

Train accidents with passenger or workforce fatalities

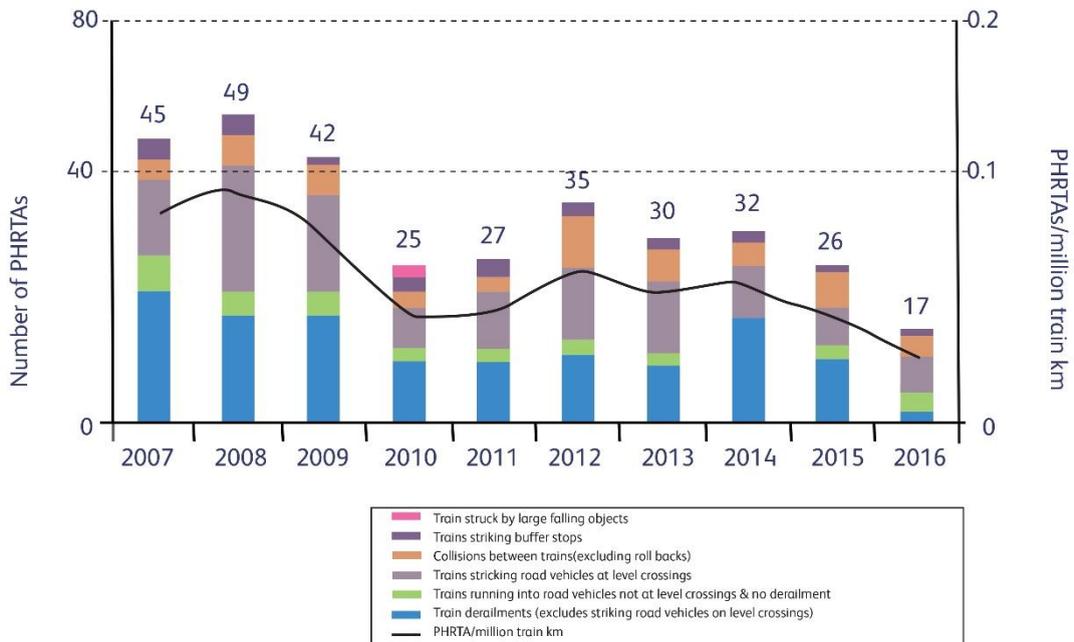


Risk from signals passed at danger (SPADs)

Risk as a percentage of the September 2006 benchmark.



Potentially higher risk train accidents



Notes



- 1) The accident at Grayrigg in Cumbria occurred at approximately 20:15 GMT on 23 February 2007, when a Virgin Trains Pendolino service from London Euston to Glasgow derailed after fouling a faulty set of points which had not been properly maintained. Of the 109 people that had been on board, 1 84-year-old Margaret Masson was fatally injured, and a further 28 were seriously injured.
- 2) The rail industry's Safety Risk Model shows that, since 2000, the fatality risk to passengers from train accidents has fallen by 87%, from an estimated 2.45 fatalities per 10 billion passenger kilometres to 0.33 fatalities per 10 billion passenger kilometres today.
- 3) The 'Learning from Operational Experience Annual Report' focuses on learning opportunities from incidents on Britain's railways and overseas, as well as other industries, and is available to download from: <https://www.rssb.co.uk/Library/risk-analysis-and-safety-reporting/2017-02-report-learning-from-operational-experience-annual-report-2015-6.pdf>

About RSSB

Through research, analysis, and insight RSSB supports our members and stakeholders to deliver a safer, more efficient and sustainable rail system.

Our vision is to be a centre of excellence, valued by its members and stakeholders as an essential contributor to their success.

Our independent evidence based approach is built on strong technical capability, and the enabling of collaborative industry engagement for the benefit of the whole rail system

Our strategic priorities are to support:

- Healthy and safe collaboration and inform industry decisions to reduce risk and harm
- Enhanced performance and efficiency updating standards, modernising systems, informing and enabling innovation
- The application of sustainability principles by collating and sharing tools and best practice.

Website: www.rssb.co.uk

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