



12 July 2017

## **New research confirms risks to passengers on stations extremely low No discernible difference between guard-operated and driver-operated services**

New research published by rail industry body RSSB has given further confirmation that there is no difference in the risk whether a train is guard-operated or run using driver controlled operation.

A forensic investigation into six years of recent safety data (2010-2015) looked at all the relevant recorded incidents at the platform edge on the national rail network. It concluded that the risk to passengers associated with “train dispatch” – the processes used by staff to ensure trains leave stations safely – to be extremely low.

According to RSSB, the high levels of safety evident implies individual rail companies are adept at managing the specific risks local to their operations and will continue to enjoy a good safety record so long as attention is focussed on managing their risks appropriately – regardless of what operation techniques they use.

With over 1.73 billion passenger journeys made, using over 2,500 stations in the 2016-17 financial year, the overall harm to passengers has actually fallen, with fewer major injuries due to slips, trips and falls being recorded.

And while 2016-7 saw 4 fatalities to passengers in accidents at the platform edge, this is roughly comparable to the risk of being killed from a lightning strike (about 2 or 3 a year in the UK), and compares to 500 deaths a year in the UK due to food poisoning, and about 1,800 deaths on the roads.

Past investigations also show that deaths at the platform edge are often linked with intoxication and individual passenger behaviour, and can occur in a range of circumstances, most often when no train is present at the time.



The latest figures also continue to confirm train travel as one of the safest forms of transport, the car being 21 times as risky, the bicycle nearly 400 times and motorcycle nearly 1,400 times.

RSSB's Director of System Safety and health, George Bearfield said, "Our research shows that the risks to passengers are extremely low, to the point that it is impossible to distinguish any meaningful difference between different dispatch techniques and so illustrate that both operation with a guard and driver controlled operation (or driver only operation) are equally safe."

**-Ends-**

### **Notes to Editors:**

You can download the research from our website here:

<https://www.rssb.co.uk/Library/risk-analysis-and-safety-reporting/2017-07-report-risk-associated-with-train-dispatch.pdf>

For further information and hi-resolution copies of charts and graphics, please contact:

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### **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

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