



13 November 2017

## **Passengers reminded to stand back when doors are closing**

**New research shows that the vast majority of rail passengers will ignore the alarms and closing doors and still risk trying to board**

**Don't become the unlucky victim of a misjudged rush, says RSSB**

Too many passengers are willing to rush to take risks to get on and off trains while the doors are closing, according to rail safety body RSSB.

Research has shown that nearly three quarters of passengers will still try to get on a train once the door alarm starts to sound, with over half still intent on boarding just before the doors start to close.

Of those interviewed as part of the research, two thirds of rail passengers failed to associate the door close alarm as meaning “stand back”, with most disregarding it and continuing to board.

The majority of passengers also mistakenly believe that all train doors are like lift doors, and will always re-open if something was obstructed in them, RSSB says.

Over 1.73 billion journeys are made by passengers every year. And although train travel is fundamentally safe, and far safer than travelling by road, in the worst cases, passengers have suffered major injuries after being trapped in the doors and dragged by the train. Such unfortunate incidents have happened at King's Cross (2011), Jarrow (April 2012), Newcastle Central (June 2013), West Wickham (April 2015), and Hayes and Harlington (July 2015).

However, RSSB's research has shown that a significant number of people – 16% - will still try to board even as the doors are physically closing together in front of them, putting themselves at risk. Even in cases where no one is injured, incidents can cause unnecessary delays to trains.

Industry is looking at how to increase passenger awareness of the issue, and encourage more vigilant behaviour, in spite of the pressures many will feel to hurry for their train.



The research has also revealed the variety in types of train and door, where some take longer than others to close. Enhanced audible messages and timings of warnings and alarm types can also help reduce the risk, according to RSSB.

RSSB's Lead Human Factors Specialist, Paul Leach, said: *"Train travel is really safe, but it's vital that passengers aren't tempted to make a dash for the doors, no matter how rushed they are. The best way to avoid the risk of a nasty accident is to keep back from the edge and not try to get on or off once the door alarm starts to sound."*

*"Despite their appearance, train doors are not like lift doors, and won't necessarily re-open if something is trapped in them."*

*"At the same time, rail companies will want to do everything they can to make passengers safe. That includes managing the risk when trains leave stations and fully learning from incidents when they do occur. Network Rail, passenger and freight train operators and other rail bodies are working closely with us on these issues to ensure train travel continues to be the safest transport on land."*

**-Ends-**

### **Notes to Editors:**

For more info on this story contact Matt Clements at RSSB on 07968 775782 or 07711 001907, or Jo Bird on 07740 087553, or email [pressoffice@rssb.co.uk](mailto:pressoffice@rssb.co.uk)

We have produced a short 45-second animation of the key stats and messages (without sound) – please feel free to use and share this: <https://play.buto.tv/FJX6p>

### **Additional points:**

Train travel is fundamentally very safe and accidents causing harm to people at the platform-train interface are rare.

There were 1,515 incidents at the platform edge in the 2015-6 financial year – that's all incidents – not just those involving doors, and regardless of whether a train was present at the time or whether boarding to alighting was involved. This is low when you consider 1.73 billion passenger journeys are made a year, but still clearly represents a risk that needs to be borne in mind.

More generally, in terms of passenger safety, the car is 21 times as risky, the bicycle nearly 400 times and motorcycle nearly 1,400 times as risky to passengers compared to trains.



The rail industry works with RSSB on this, and has a dedicated “Platform-Train Interface Strategy”, to make the gap between the platform and the train safer, and to ensure that growing numbers of passengers can continue to enjoy safe and efficient train services in the future. <https://www.rssb.co.uk/Pages/platform-train-interface.aspx>

This includes the cross-industry passenger safety campaign “Lend a helping hand” – and a refreshed poster image for door safety.

The research which revealed passenger perceptions and attitudes towards door closure formed part of a project “Optimising door closure arrangements to improve boarding and alighting” (reference T1102), which was completed in May 2017.

<https://www.rssb.co.uk/research-development-and-innovation/research-and-development/research-project-catalogue/T1102>

The fieldwork consisted of 69 passenger interviews at mainline railway stations across the country, and was conducted by two human factors specialists between October and December 2016. This work was undertaken for RSSB by DNV GL.

### **Is there a difference in risk if doors are operated by the driver rather than the guard?**

The focus of this campaign is on passenger perceptions of how doors operate, regardless of who operates the doors. Research that we published in July 2017 looked at six years of data and found that safety levels are as good for passengers who board and alight from trains without a guard being present as they are for those using other services. This looked at the risk to passengers as they enter and leave train carriages and as the train departs from a platform when no guard is present and the driver controls the opening and closing of doors (known as driver controlled operation (DCO), and sometimes also referred to as driver only operation or (DOO)). The report concludes that levels of risk across all forms of dispatch are low.

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

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