

RSSB – ANNUAL SAFETY PERFORMANCE REPORT 2016-17

Introduction

In this Reps' Bulletin the Railway Safety and Standards Board (RSSB)'s *2016-2017 Annual Safety Performance Report* (ASPR) that was published in July 2017 will be considered with the intention of highlighting workforce issues.

Reps may wish to read this Bulletin alongside those published in previous years (all available on TSSA's websiteⁱ):

ASPR 2015-16 (H&S/117/Jul 2016)

ASPR 2014-15 (H&S/111/Aug 2015)

ASPR 2013-14 (H&S/109/June 2015),

As with the earlier publications, the 2016-17 Report also includes a range of details, including:

- comparisons with the safety performance of European railways which showed that Britain's railways are, again, the safest amongst the ten largest EU 25 railways but had slipped from third to fourth safest out of all the nations;ⁱⁱ
- intermodal comparisons showing that mainline rail travel

is safer than all other forms of land transport;ⁱⁱⁱ

- SPAD incidents (reduced to 272 from 282 in 2015-16):
 - 7 SPADs received a 'potentially severe' risk ranking, which is one fewer than in 2015-16;^{iv}
 - 64 (compared to 70 in 2015-16) of the SPADs in 2016-17 related to freight trains (20 of them were ranked as 'potentially severe' and 10 as 'potentially significant')The ASPR notes that, "In the last five years, the normalised rate of freight SPADs has shown an upward trend, however the rate decreased in 2016/17."^v

In addition, there is a discussion about trends related to the safety of passengers alongside a very sobering consideration of incidents affecting members of the public (not passengers) in areas such as suicides, trespassers and the use of level crossings. There is also a recognition of how dealing with the aftermath of these incidents can leave staff shocked and traumatised, possibly

unable to return to their previous role, whilst there is a brief summary of industry efforts to reduce the number of suicides, including reference to working with partners (such as the trade unions) and contracts with the Samaritans.^{vi}

The ASPR is an important document that picks up safety trends from “incidents connected with the operation of the mainline railway in Great Britain, but is extended to include fatalities and injuries to the workforce occurring in road traffic accidents while driving on duty, and fatalities and injuries in yards, depots and sidings (YDS).”^{vii}

The latest ASPR covers the financial year ending in March 2017, and, like previous years, it is designed to both inform those in the industry who manage risk as well as railway employees, trade unions, safety reps, passengers, government ministers and others.

For union reps working in the industry, the document spells out a series of issues that should require their attention for potential further action. A further Reps Bulletin will address health and wellbeing issues which feature in the ASPR and ORR publications.

Where can I find the Report?

The ASPR is available on the RSSB’s website. There are two reports:^{viii}

- Full Report
- Key Charts Report

The reports are also available along with a video of a webinar which seeks

to highlight key facts and answer some questions.

A further document, *Learning from Operational Experience Annual Report* that goes with the ASPR has not so far been published for the period 2016-17 (the previous years’ reports are at on the RSSB’s website).^{ix}

Headline Statistics in the ASPR

The Full Report gives some headline statistics that includes:

- 0 passenger or workforce fatalities in train accidents for the tenth consecutive year;
- In total, there were 39 accidental fatalities, 469 major injuries, 12,376 minor injuries and 1,047 cases of shock/trauma
- Of the 39 fatalities:
 - one workforce fatality during the year, occurring in a road traffic incident;
 - five were passengers (4 at Passenger Train Interface (PTI); Note: In ten years since 2007-8 there have been 38 fatalities at the PTI));
 - 33 were members of the public, of whom 27 were engaged in acts of trespass.
- There were also 237 deaths as a result of suicide or suspected suicide (251 in 2015/16).
- Of the 469 major injuries:
 - 266 were passengers (294 in 2015-16);
 - 164 staff (up from 160 in 2015-16);
 - 22 public (non-trespass) up from 16 in 2015-16;

- 17 trespass, down from 22;

In addition, there were 47 people classed as 'suicide' who suffered major injuries (rather than death), up from 33 in the previous year.

What are the trends in workforce safety?

Behind the headlines there are other details presented in the Report that identify trends in workforce safety. Amongst these trends are that:

- **Fatalities:**
1). One worker was killed in a road traffic accident whilst on duty in 2016-17. The previous year was the first on record during which there were no workforce fatalities;

Road traffic accidents have become the largest cause of infrastructure worker deaths at work. In the ten years since April 2007, 19 infrastructure workers have been killed, 11 when on or about the running line (6 struck by trains), but 7 people have been killed as a result of being in a road traffic accident (including the person in 2016-17) whilst on duty;

- **Major injuries** (as defined by RIDDOR 1995, Schedule 1):
1). There were 164 workforce major injuries in 2016-17, up from 160 in the previous year but down from the two years prior to that (2013-14 (177) and 2014-15 (182));

2). Infrastructure workers

(defined as "those whose work involves inspecting, maintaining and renewing the track, signalling and telecommunications equipment, and other railway infrastructure, such as earthworks and bridges") experienced 72 major injuries whilst **working on or about the running line**, up from 56 in 2015-16 and the third highest since 2007-8:

- Half (36) of all incidents in 2016-17 were attributed to slips, trips and falls, up from the 27 reported in the previous year which had been the lowest level since 2008-9;
- almost a third (24 incidents) were due to contact with an object, again up from the 19 reported in 2015-16 and equal to the number that occurred in 2014-15 and therefore the joint highest number since 2009-10;

In the last ten years, slips, trips and falls have represented 47% of all major injuries whilst on or about the running line with a further 30% originating from contact with an object.

3). Road driving risk relates to those members of the workforce who "travel by means of a motorised vehicle between sites while on duty, or travelling to and from their home to a non-regular place of work, including door-to-door taxi provision."^x It does not include commuting

from home to the worker's usual place of work.

The first thing to emphasise is that road driving is becoming an increasingly important element that affects workers as witness the latest fatality which has increased the total to 7 since 2011-12, all of whom were infrastructure workers).

In addition there were 8 major injuries from road driving recorded in 2016-17 and 177 minor injuries (34 of which were Class 1 (where the injured party was incapacitated from normal duties for more than three days, not including the day of the injury).^{xi} These figures represent an increase on the previous year. There were 21 recorded cases of shock or trauma from road driving, 19 (90%) of which were Class 1 (ie occurred in an accident that had a notable risk for a fatal outcome).

The industrial sector of the 177 injured workers was:

	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17
TOC	15	25	15
FOC	2	3	Nil
Contractor	8	3	51
Other	24	16	---
Network Rail	75	95	111
Total	124	142	177

Over the past 10 years, the greatest proportion of road driving incidents has involved staff working for Network Rail (65%), most of whom were employed as infrastructure workers. However, the Contractors category also comprises infrastructure workers, adding a further 17% (6% in 2015-16) of reported injuries amongst this group of employees.

The categories TOC and FOC account for around one fifth (down from a quarter in 2015-16) of reported injuries. A number of these events involve train drivers, station staff and other members of the workforce travelling by taxi to work locations.

NOTE: the "Other" category is not reported in 2016-17.

4). For staff working on trains or at stations, there were 42 major injuries (71% at stations), down from 53 in 2015-16. The most frequent events were:

- slips, trips and falls (11)
- platform train interface (9)
- on board injuries (9)
- assault and abuse (5)
- contact with object/person (4).^{xii}

RSSB note that the number of slips, trips and falls has reduced from 18 in the previous year, whilst PTI related injuries have also reduced from 11. Both

these categories combined, however, still make up 50% of all accidents occurring for workers in trains and stations

In addition, on-board injuries increased by 1 (8 in 2015-16) making it the worst year since 2011-12.

RSSB also report that the number of major injuries when combined with those classed as minor (2,718) or attributed to shock (565), 88% of harm occurs when boarding or alighting from a train.

5). Amongst staff involved with train operations (related to shunters, train crew or other staff when they are on or about the track and engaged in activities related to the movement of trains as distinct from the previous category), there were two major injuries to staff during 2016-17 (one in 2015-16).

Additionally, page 72 of the Report highlights 50 minor injuries of which:

- 39 were to drivers or other train crew,
- 8 occurred to shunters,
- 3 occurred to train maintenance staff.

6). In Yards, depots and sidings there were 38 major injuries (same as 2015-16), 22 of which were as a result of slips, trips and falls. 8 occurred after contact with an object.

7.) Freight operations led to 7 major injuries.

- **Assaults**

1). Unlike the 2013-14 ASPR, the last two years' Reports have not contained anything like the same level of detail on assaults and neither does it categorise them into physical assault, threats or verbal abuse;

2). Workforce assaults leading to injury or shock/trauma were detailed as follows:

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
In Stations	530	473	535
On Trains	313	278	351
Totals	843	751	886

3). Included in these figures are the 5 assaults on staff working on trains or stations that led to major injuries (see above);

4). As can be seen from the table above, the reported number of assaults resulting in harm to the workforce on trains and in stations has increased in 2016/17 (highest since 2011-12 on Stations (704) and 2013-14 on Trains (368)).

5). Over the last 10 years, around 60% of assaults have occurred in stations;

- **Minor Injuries** (as defined by RIDDOR 1995, Schedule 1): The total number of reported minor injuries for all groups of staff stood at 5676 in 2016-17, 737 of which were rated as Class 1^{xiii} which includes:

Staff on:	Total	Class 1	Class 2
Running Line	1374	204	1170
Road driving	147	34	113
Trains & Stations	2718	297	2421
Trains Ops	50	12	38
Freight Ops	125	---	---
Yards & Depots	1171	157	1014

By way of comparison, in 2015-16, the number of reported minor injuries stood at 5749, 745 being rated as Class 1.

- **Shock and trauma:**
1). There were 873 reported workforce incidents in 2016-17 (768 in 2015-16), 245 of which were Class 1.^{xiv} This included:

Staff on:	Total	Class 1	Class 2
Running Line	17	1	16
Road Driving	21	19	2
Trains & Stations	565	3	562
Trains Ops	6	0	6

Freight Ops	7	2	5
Yards & Depots	6	0	2

Reps Action

The advice and recommended actions for TSSA reps are:

- Familiarise yourself with the RSSB reports;
- Review any accident reports that have been made by your colleagues so that you can see whether the trends in ASPR relate to your workplace – or whether they show something different where you are based;
- Get involved with any investigation that takes place after an accident or incident occurring to those people you speak up for (including for near misses);
- Participate in your local safety committee.
- Be aware of the wider context because the ASPR reports accidents and incidents and does not report how workers are affected by past contact with asbestos and other disease causing substances. A further Reps Bulletin will pick up on trends caused by health risks.

Acknowledgements and references

This Bulletin has been written based on the RSSB's *Annual Safety Performance Report 2016-17: A reference guide to safety trends on GB railways*. A link to the report is to found earlier in the notes below.

ⁱ Available at: <http://www.tssa.org.uk/en/reprs-area/reprs-bulletins/health--safety/index.cfm>

ⁱⁱ See Page 26 of ASPR 2017 at: <https://www.rssb.co.uk/Library/risk-analysis-and-safety-reporting/2017-07-report-annual-safety-performance-report.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ See Page 19 of ASPR

^{iv} See Page 72 of ASPR 2017

^v See Page 121 of ASPR

^{vi} See Page 97 of ASPR 2017

^{vii} Page 1 of ASPR 2017

^{viii} Both are available at: <https://www.rssb.co.uk/risk-analysis-and-safety-reporting/safety-performance-reports>

^{ix} See: <https://www.rssb.co.uk/risk-analysis-and-safety-reporting/accident-investigation-and-learning/learning-from-operational-experience>

^x Page 55 of ASPR 2017

^{xi} Page 57 of ASPR 2017

^{xii} Page 40 of ASPR 2017

^{xiii} Class 1 means that the injured party was off work for more than three days, not including the day of the injury

^{xiv} Class 1 Defined as “involved witnessing a fatality.”