

Safety

ATOC's view:

- TOCS continue to put the highest priority on safety, recognising that it requires continuous effort to maintain the improvements already achieved. Passengers and staff do not expect to be harmed whilst on the railway; nor do the public whilst living and working near it or when interacting with it at stations and level crossings.
- Train Operating Companies (TOC) value highly the gradually improving railway safety record and are committed to ensuring that their staff are fully trained in all relevant aspects of safety management and their rolling stock and stations are well maintained.
- Notwithstanding the extremely good safety record, train operators believe that further improvements in rail safety are achievable. More can be done to manage risks, eliminating them wherever that is practicable, mitigating them where it is not. Operators understand the aspirations of the Rail Regulator for 'zero workforce and industry-caused passenger fatalities, with an ever decreasing overall safety risk'¹, and will do all they reasonably can to meet them.

Background and key issues:

- The TOCs have contributed significantly to the improvement in rail safety that has taken place since the industry was privatised in the mid-1990s. On the basis of fatality risk per passenger kilometre, rail travel is:
 - three times safer than bus/coach travel
 - twenty times safer than using a car
 - 300 times safer than cycling or walking
 - over 1,000 times safer than motorbike riding
 - broadly similar to flying.
- The incidence of fatal train accidents has now fallen to less than one per year. The number of Signals Passed At Danger has reduced significantly since the fitting of the Train Protection & Warning System; such events have fallen by 29% and the risk associated with them by 87%.
- Societal expectations of rail safety are likely to continue to rise and the Train Operators will meet these aspirations through continuous improvement in their safety processes and culture. They know they will need to continue to improve their management of the risks associated with their own activities and those of their suppliers, as well as of those of other people.
- TOCs are becoming increasingly adept at reducing the risk of human error through effective training and competence management arrangements. The technologies they use are able increasingly to mitigate the effects of instances of human error when these arise. The European Rail Traffic Management System is expected to be a good example of this as it will virtually eliminate the risks associated with train driving once introduced.
- Train Operators intend to increase their efforts to combat the many types of criminal behaviour which lead to harm on the railway, including assault, theft, robbery, trespass and vandalism, plus such things as terrorist action and attempted suicide. The fact that criminal behaviour may become more

common during a severe and prolonged economic downturn is an added concern at the present time.

- Close cooperation between the main industry players is essential if rail safety is to get even better in the years ahead; the relationship between the TOCs and Network Rail is key to this. However, a positive relationship with the Office of Rail Regulation will also be important and a common understanding about the way that safety is factored into the industry's decision making processes essential. Both the Rail Safety & Standards Board and ATOC have important roles to play, ensuring the industry continues to work together effectively in setting standards and sharing best practice.

Relevant ATOC activity:

- ATOC facilitates discussions about railway safety matters principally at its Operations Council, Engineering Council and Safety Forum.
- In addition ATOC and the TOCs participate, along with representatives from Network Rail, in RSSB's national initiatives on operational safety and community safety. At national level they are represented on RSSB's Operations Focus Group and Community Safety Steering Group whilst, at local level, individual TOCs discuss railway safety matters with local Network Rail 'Route' organisations in Operational Risk Reduction and Mitigation Groups and Community Safety Partnership Groups.
- Reflecting the growing influence of the European Community in railway safety matters, ATOC, Network Rail and RSSB representatives are increasingly involved in safety-related groups run by various European agencies, in particular the European Railway Agency, the Community of European Railways & Infrastructure Companies and the International Union of Railways.

Key documents/links:

- RSSB Annual Safety Reports
<http://www.rssb.co.uk/safety/spr/spreports.asp>
- RSSB Community Safety newsletters
http://www.rssb.co.uk/national_programmes/community_safety_enewsletter.asp
- ¹ Office of Rail Regulation: Promoting safety and value in Britain's railways. Our strategy for 2009-14
<http://www.rail-reg.gov.uk/upload/pdf/388.pdf>

Steve Bence

steve.bence@atoc.org

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