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Dr Allan Sefton Director of Rail Safety

‘Are the railways safe enough?’



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Safety and Standards Principles/Values

Victorian
Profits before safety

20th Century
Safety = survival

Government approval

Risk creator also manages

Engineering solutions

Risk based solutions

Discipline, rules

Competent managers/workers

“Modernisation”



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Improvements since 1990 Fatalities

Year	Passengers	Railway Staff	Other MOPs	Trespassers and Suicides	Total
1990	37	22	19	308	386
2002/03	23	7	21	257	308

Train Accidents

Year	Collisions	Derailments	Obstructions	Fires	Total
1990	290	192	510	283	1275
2002/03	69	67	455	292	923



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- All public transport safety is strictly regulated
- Risks from railways, aircraft and buses are equally controlled
- Risks from private cars is six times higher – comparisons cannot be made.
- No transport system is absolutely safe.



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- A range of regulatory mechanisms are used to control public transport safety including -
- controlling access to the market
 - providing public assurance that standards are achieved
 - applying significant resources to regulatory inspections
 - robustly enforcing failings



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- No fatalities or major injuries due to train accidents in 2003
- Passenger injuries due to train movements increased slightly over 2002
- Signals Passed at Danger
 - ◆ Baseline decrease of 44% in 2003
 - ◆ Recent monthly increases.
- 60 other accident fatalities, many at level crossings – same as 2002



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Railway Safety

- **Headline performance improving.**
- **But there are still areas of concern**
 - ◆ Network “ageing, stretched and fragile”
 - ◆ Some major incident precursors worsening
- **HMRI is helping industry to reduce major incident precursors**
- **Management systems also help to prevent other risks – e.g. trackside work**



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- **Major accidents have understandably damaged the railway’s reputation.**
- **The cause of major accidents create the climate of “risk aversion”, not their frequency or circumstances.**
- **Public expect rail industry to effectively manage their risks**



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- **Sensible health and safety is about managing risks not eliminating them.**
- **Reasonable practicability approach ensures that costs are an integral part of the decision making process**
- **Safety regulator must be independent to be able to provide public assurance**



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Summary

- **No one expects risk free public transport.**
- **Public must be assured that:**
 - ◆ All risks properly assessed
 - ◆ Risk based precautions in place
 - ◆ Management systems will maintain precautions even if under pressure
- **Good cooperation is the key to a modern risk controlled railway**