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HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION

RAILWAY SAFETY PUBLICATION OF ANNUAL REPORT ON RAILWAY SAFETY

A Paper by IAN F CRAWFORD

Cleared by ALLAN SEFTON on 30 October 2003

Issue

1. This paper introduces the Railway Safety Annual Report for 2002/03.

Timing

2. It is planned to publish the Annual Report on 17 November.

Recommendation

3. The Commission is asked to note:
 - the contents of the report; and
 - the proposed publication date.

Background

4. Annual Reports on railway safety have been produced for over 150 years. Most recently, the HSE's Annual Report on Railway Safety' has been produced under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) and the then Secretaries of State for the Environment and Transport (dated 10 October 1996). This requires HSE to make an annual report to the HSC and Secretary of State for Transport.
5. The Report is principally a source of statistical data derived from the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR), including information on key findings and trends. However, it also provides a mechanism for disseminating information about the work of HMRI and an opportunity for cascading messages on emerging issues and findings from accident investigations, which would not necessarily justify separate publication.
6. In recent years, sales of the report have dropped to only a few hundred and the cost of production far exceeds any sales income. As a consequence, last year's report highlighted HSE's intent to review the future format and structure of the Report. This has been done and a decision was taken to:
 - produce a more focused report; and

- make the report more accessible by publishing it on HSE's rail-web page only.
7. The new report is structured around the statistical data (ie fatalities, injuries, train incidents, train defects and enforcement) and is supported by: a summary of the year in brief including enforcements/ incidents; good trends/bad trends; key facts; and main messages that HSE wants to get across.

Argument

8. Good and bad indicators, identified from the statistics, are highlighted in Annex 1.
9. The derailment at Potters Bar on 10 May was the only major incident involving multiple fatalities during the year.
10. Overall, the message is one of improvements, with a reduction in the numbers of collisions, derailments, train incidents, SPADs, broken rails, track buckles, rolling stock failures, and cases of vandalism. This is especially encouraging as all these took place during time of change and transition for the industry.
11. However, the number of people fatally injured is up and there is little change in the number of injuries to railway employees, or level crossing incidents and no change in the number of assaults on railway staff.
12. The key messages, identified in the Foreword, are:
- there has been considerable change to the structure of the rail industry;
 - the changes are being taken into account as part of HSE's Rail Delivery Programme, which is focusing HSE's railway related work over the next 18 months;
 - the railway industry needs to maintain a clear focus on preventing catastrophic events by demonstrating that they are systematically managing risks to drive down the incidents that are the precursors to major accidents; and
 - HSE's specific contribution has been to link its own Public Service Agreement target to the Railway Group's objective of reducing the number of train accident precursors such that the associated risk, of the precursors leading to a catastrophic event, decreases by 10% on a yearly basis from the 2001/02 benchmark level of 100 (ie the risk-weighted value of the precursors in 2001/02 have been proportioned to a total value for that year of 100). This, in turn, will lead to a re-alignment of HMRI's own resources and planned intervention inspections.
13. The Foreword to the Report (at Annex 2) has been agreed by Allan Sefton in his capacity as the new Director for Rail Safety.

Consultation

14. Internally in HMRI, RPC, and Press Office. A copy of the draft has also been sent, for information, to:
- The Office of the Rail Regulator;
 - The Strategic Railway Authority;
 - The Rail Accident Investigation Branch;
 - Network Rail;

- The Rail Safety and Standards Board; and
- Railways International and General Branch DfT.

15. We are continuing to make minor changes before the report goes onto the internet.

Presentation

16. Publication and a press briefing are scheduled for 17 November. The briefing will be led by Allan Sefton as the Director for Railway Safety and will major on:

Train incidents;

Trackworker safety;

Track maintenance;

Level crossings;

Vandalism; and

Safety on London Underground.

Costs and Benefits

17. Not quantified.

Financial/Resource Implications for HSE

18. Catered for in existing budgets.

Environmental Implications

19. Not applicable.

Other Implications

20. The report does not cover the recent incidents on London Underground, which occurred outside the reporting period.

Action

21. The Commission is asked to note:

- the contents of the report; and
- the proposed publication date.

Good Indicators

- Train collisions down by 32%, from 102 to 69.
- Total train incidents¹ fell by 17% from 1704 to 1421 – the lowest since the introduction of RIDDOR 95.
- Broken rails on Network Rails infrastructure fell by 17% from 534 to 445.
- Track buckles on Network Rails infrastructure fell by 57% from 50 to 28.
- Injuries to railway staff arising from assaults down 23% to 355.
- Acts of vandalism down 19% from 922 to 742.
- Category A SPADs on Network Rails infrastructure fell by 8% to 401, of which 143 were serious – the lowest totals since records began in 1985.

Bad indicators

- Potters Bar derailment on 10 May, 7 fatalities.
- 10 people fatally injured in train incidents, up 5 on 2001/02.
- 50 people (excluding trespassers and suicides) fatally injured on the railways, up 14 from 2001/02.
- Fatalities at level crossings increased by 1 from 12 to 13.
- 7 railway staff fatally injured, 3 were track workers.
- Vandalism still accounts for 52% of all train incidents.

¹ Train incidents are collisions, derailments, trains running into obstructions, fires on trains and missile damage to train windows.