

RSSB – ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT 2019-20

Introduction

In this Reps' Bulletin the Railway Safety and Standards Board (RSSB)'s *Annual Health & Safety Report 2019/20* (AHSR) will be considered with the intention of highlighting workforce issues.

Last year's AHSR was the subject of the Reps Bulletin issued to reps under the TSSA reference H&S/128/Nov 2019. Prior to that, the RSSB's AHSR was known as the Annual Safety Performance Reports (ASPR) which have also been reported on in previous years and which are available on TSSA's website¹:

ASPR 2017-18 (H&S/125/Aug 2018)

ASPR 2016-17 (H&S/123/Sep 2017)

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

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

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

Unlike in previous years where the AHSR has featured as a large document, this year's AHSR begins with a short ten page Summary document that introduces key themes and is supported by detailed information that appears in fourteen supporting reports:

- Railway Safety in Context
- Improving our capability 2019/20
- Workforce health and wellbeing
- Public behaviour
- Station operations
- Occupational road risk management
- Level crossings

- Fatigue risk management
- Workforce safety
- Infrastructure asset integrity
- Work-related violence and assaults
- Train operations
- Freight
- Rolling stock asset integrity

All of these publications appear on the RSSB's Website²

What are the headlines in rail safety in 2019/20? The AHSR's "Railway Safety in Context" paper reports:

- 31 people died as a result of accidents in 2019/20;
- 499 received major injuries – both represent a decrease on recent years.
- 283 people died as a result of suicide or suspected suicide. This is an increase on the 269 recorded last year.
- While there were no passenger fatalities in train derailments or collisions in 2019/20, 7 people were killed on trains or in stations.
- There were 21 fatalities (17 of whom were trespassing at the time of the incident) to members of the public from accidental causes in 2019/20, which is 7 fewer than the previous year.
- There were 3 workforce fatalities in 2019/20, an increase on recent years:

- Two of those killed were Network Rail track workers struck by a train on 3rd July 2019 whilst working as part of a team on the mainline near Margam East Junction;
- The third was a driver crushed between two trains at Tyseley depot on 14th December 2019;

■ Passenger and workforce fatality rates in the UK were well below the EU average over the five-year period 2014-2018;

■ There were 25 potentially higher risk train accidents (PHRTA) in 2019/20, which includes collisions:

- with buffer stops;
- between trains;
- resulting in derailments (excluding with road vehicles on level crossings)
- with road vehicles not at level crossings (and with no derailment)
- with road vehicles at level crossings

The number of PHRTAs is similar to the preceding 5 years.

The 2019/20 Safety Overview for the railway workforce over four years shows:

Financial Year	2016 /17	2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20
Fatalities	1	1	2	3
Major Injuries	168	156	143	130
Minor Injuries	5765	5352	5107	5099
Incidents of shock	890	716	814	690

How do these figures break down over the last four years?³

Fatalities in Financial Year	2016 /17	2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20
Contact with object	0	1	0	0
Fall from height	0	0	1	0
Road traffic accident	1	0	0	0
Struck by train	0	0	1	3

Major Injuries in Financial Year	2016 /17	2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20
Slips, Trips and Falls	71	72	68	53
Contact with object	38	39	33	31
Electric shock	1	1	3	1
Manual handling/awkward movement	5	3	0	5
Platform edge incidents	16	11	9	7
Road traffic accidents	10	3	4	4
On-board injuries	13	17	15	14
Other accidents	9	10	11	15
Total	168	156	143	130

Minor Injuries in Financial Year	2016 /17	2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20
Class 1	759	764	689	749
Class 2	5006	4588	4418	4350
Total	5765	5352	5107	5099

Incidents of Shock in Financial Year	2016 /17	2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20
	890	716	814	690

Does the industry have a strategy for health and safety on the railways?

The RSSB's "Improving our capability 2019/20" (part of the AHSR) is derived from the recently updated cross rail industry strategic document, "Leading Health and Safety in Britain's Railways" (LHSBR) which forms the basis of what is reported in the AHSR publication.

The LHSBR⁴ describes how the industry needs to work collaboratively around twelve identified strategic risk areas including:

- Fatigue Risk Management
- Occupational Road Risk

- Workforce Health and Wellbeing
- Workforce Safety
- Work related Violence and Trauma

Representatives from the trade unions are involved in all of these groups as are employers and safety professionals.

TSSA reps are recommended to make themselves familiar with the LHSBR as well as the "Improving our capability 2019/20" report because it will give an overview of approaches, objectives and progress. To help with the familiarisation, a future Reps Bulletin will be issued looking at the strategic areas identified.

What does the Annual Health & Safety Report 2019/20 have to say about Workforce Safety?

The "Workforce Safety 2019/20"⁵ part of the AHSR concentrates on three areas:

- running line
- yards, depots and sidings
- on-board trains (excluding Passenger Train Interface (PTI) events).

NOTE: Due to space considerations, in this Bulletin we will only look at running line.

The "Workforce Safety" report rightly begins by giving attention to the tragic deaths of three track workers during the Financial Year 2019/20 but then goes onto note:

"Yet behind the fatalities lay a number of high profile near misses, including the incident at Kirtlebridge (November 2019), when three track workers 'jumped clear less than one second before [a] train passed".

The report goes onto describe how "there has been no sustained change in the number of recorded near miss events over the last five years"⁶ and that the level of near misses has remained consistently around approximately five incidents per period.

Near misses amongst track workers has been the subject of concern by both the Rail Accident Investigation Branch⁷ and the RSSB which has conducted a "deep dive" of data from SMIS (Safety Management Intelligence System). Consequently, the

RSSB identified the largest number of near misses occurring around 11am and were linked to "warning type Safe Systems of Work" issues.

Underlying causes were identified as related to:

- predominantly, human performance factors around 'decision errors' (eg staff misunderstanding or making the wrong assumptions) and 'slip or lapses in concentration' (unintentionally saying or doing the wrong thing);
- closely followed by incident factors related to 'verbal communications,' 'written information on the day' and 'risk management.' In this category, the RSSB report⁸ identified examples of:
 - incomplete and incorrect safe system of work packs;
 - not communicating (or communicating too late);
 - calculation of warning times.

In 2019 TSSA took up the issue of track worker safety with Network Rail, the ORR and RSSB and later made a detailed submission to the Williams Rail Review. Our submission was designed to highlight the risk to staff working on the railway infrastructure and how that could be increased if safety was further compromised by organisational change stemming from the Review and by considerations like cost cutting or profiteering.

The CIRAS⁹ safety culture survey for 2019/20 also suggests issues of:

- health and safety issues not being taken seriously by managers
- the promotion of confidential reporting
- no acknowledgement of staff who report safety issues.

What does the AHSR have to say about work related violence and trauma? Part of the pack of documents making up

the AHSR is one about "Work-Related Violence and Trauma 2019/20."¹⁰

Amongst the headlines identified by the

RSSB are that whilst “assaults on staff account for 1% of the total safety risk on the mainline railway...the overall trend in reported workforce assaults appears to be gradually rising, with a more pronounced rise evident in assaults on station staff, and a slight decline in assaults on revenue protection staff.”

RSSB report that in 2019/20 alone there were:

- 355 Threatened physical assaults
- 499 Threatened abuse instances
- 1233 Physical assaults
- 6 Indecent exposures
- 159 Attempted physical assaults
- 2303 Non-physical abuse cases
- 2501 Violence reports in SMIS
- 148 members of staff lost time due to work related violence¹¹

In terms of injuries suffered (and in comparison with previous years):

Major Injuries from workplace violence by Financial Year	2016 /17	2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20
Station Staff	1	3	3	5
Revenue Protection Staff	2	2	2	4
Train Drivers	1	1	0	2
Other on-board train crew	1	1	0	4
Other workforce	1	0	0	2
Total	6	7	5	13

Minor Injuries from workplace violence in Financial Year	2016 /17	2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20
Class 1	34	54	50	45
Class 2	354	323	372	379
Total	388	377	422	424

Incidents of Shock from workplace violence in Financial Year	2016 /17	2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20
	467	433	472	445

RSSB also highlighted that whilst a lot of good work has been done to understand and reduce violence and trauma experienced by staff, the LHSBR identifies a number of strategic challenges, particularly:

- data on work related violence and trauma are inconsistently gathered and reported;
- a concern that recruitment and onboarding processes do not always adequately equip and prepare staff to deal with these situations;
- some workplace policies and practices can even increase the risk of violence and other traumatic events.

The document goes into a lot of analysis that explains:

- Why station staff are experiencing the pronounced rise in assaults, with one reason being that they are often on the front line when it comes to dealing with passengers who have missed their trains or experienced travel disruption through delayed or cancelled services;
- BTP analysis reveals that revenue disputes drive violence both at the gate line and on trains;
- Alcohol and mental health plays a part in violence towards staff as does dealing with fare evasion and ticket irregularities.

The document also looks at issues of trauma and what is being done to combat both work related violence and trauma.

Reps Action

The advice and recommended actions for TSSA reps are:

- a) Familiarise yourself with the RSSB reports;
- b) Review any accident reports that have been made by your colleagues so that you can see whether the trends in AHSR relate to your workplace – or whether they show something different where you are based;
- c) 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);
- d) Participate in your local safety committee.
- e) Be aware of the wider context because the AHSR reports accidents and incidents and does not report how workers are affected by past contact with asbestos, silica dust or other disease causing substances.

Acknowledgements and references This Bulletin has been written based on the RSSB's *Annual Health & Safety Report 2019/20*.

NOTES:

- 1 <https://www.tssa.org.uk/en/reps-area/reps-bulletins/health--safety/index.cfm>
- 2 See: <https://www.rssb.co.uk/en/safety-and-health/monitoring-safety/safety-performance-reports>
- 3 Figures taken from RSSB "Workforce Safety 2019/20" AHSR document.
- 4 Available to download from: <https://www.rssb.co.uk/safety-and-health/leading-health-and-safety-on-britains-railway>
- 5 Available to download from: <https://www.rssb.co.uk/en/safety-and-health/monitoring-safety/safety-performance-reports>
- 6 Page 2 of downloadable report in Note 5
- 7 See, for instance, RAIB "Report 07/2017: Track workers class investigation", published 13th April 2017 and available at: <https://www.gov.uk/raib-reports/track-workers-class-investigation>
- 8 See Page 8 of downloadable report in Note 5.
- 9 Confidential Incident Reporting & Analysis Service, reported at Page 10 of Workforce Safety document.
- 10 Available to download from: <https://www.rssb.co.uk/en/safety-and-health/monitoring-safety/safety-performance-reports>
- 11 See Figure 3, Page 5 of "Work-Related Violence and Trauma 2019/20" for mean figures by job.