

Our approach to maintaining health and safety on Britain's railways

Summary

As the health and safety authority for Britain's railways, we must make arrangements for protecting the health, safety and welfare of workers, and for protecting others against health or safety risks relating to the activities of people at work.

The main responsibility for managing work-related health and safety risks rests with employers and the self-employed (known as 'duty holders'). We decide how effective they are at doing this by assessing their actions to get rid of or reduce the risks their activities may create. We do this by investigating incidents and complaints, inspecting samples of safety-management systems, and examining arrangements for managing risks. We use the information we gather to assess the effectiveness of the safety-management system and the organisation's management abilities and attitude.

Where we find significant failings, we use our powers to bring about improvement, including taking formal enforcement action, if appropriate, in line with our [enforcement policy statement](#) and [enforcement management model](#).

We do not examine all risks as this would not use our resources efficiently.

Introduction

Under section 18 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 we must make sure that we make adequate arrangements for enforcing health and safety law on Britain's railways. This includes metro systems, light rail and tram systems, and heritage railways, as well as the mainline railway.

Under health and safety laws, employers and the self-employed must reduce risks to employees and others who may be affected by their work. Employees

must take reasonable care of themselves and others, and co-operate with their employer in health and safety matters.

This statement sets out our approach to maintaining health and safety on Britain's railways.

Our aims

We aim to:

- make sure that the health, safety and welfare of railway employees, and the health and safety of others (mainly passengers) who may be exposed to risks from work on the railway, is protected; and
- promote continuous improvement in health and safety measures on Britain's railways.

Our vision

The health and safety vision of our 2009-2014 corporate strategy is for *“zero workforce and industry-caused passenger fatalities, with an ever decreasing overall safety risk.”*

Our approach

Our approach is to be sure that the industry manages risks adequately, and continuously improves its health and safety performance as far as is reasonably possible.

Our arrangements for enforcing relevant laws include inspecting and investigating incidents and complaints. Our inspections evaluate safety-management systems, by choosing one or more target risk areas and examining the arrangements for managing those risks. We choose these target risk areas using evidence we have and knowledge of the individual organisation's health and safety performance. We do not examine all risks as this would not use our resources efficiently.

We follow our approach by doing the following:

- identifying whether what duty holders say they are doing (in their safety-management system) is being put into practice;

- monitoring health and safety performance indicators, including using assessments done by other bodies, such as the Rail Safety and Standards Board and the Rail Accident Investigation Branch;
- providing advice and guidance to help duty holders meet relevant laws;
- using our powers and influence to help the industry tackle common issues such as competence, supervision, managing change and safety awareness;
- using appropriate enforcement to;
 - make sure duty holders take immediate action to deal with serious risks;
 - help duty holders meet the legal requirements; and
 - if appropriate, make sure duty holders are held to account in the courts for any health and safety failings.

The principles we apply

We believe the following:

- those who create risks from their work activities are responsible for protecting workers and others from the consequences of those risks;
- sensible health and safety is about managing risks, [as far as is reasonably possible](#), rather than expecting there to never be any risk;
- that the better regulation principles of proportionality, accountability, targeting, transparency and consistency, as explained in our [enforcement policy](#), apply to health and safety matters;
- that auditing a sample of duty holders health and safety arrangements provides reliable information to guide our view of the industry's health and safety performance;
- that duty holders having the freedom to decide how they manage their risks, provides an appropriate framework of health and safety law.

The processes we use to help us achieve our aims

The processes we use to help us achieve our aims include the following:

- monitoring a duty holder's safety-management system (a description of how the company goes about managing their health and safety responsibilities) over the life of the certificate (for transport undertakings) and authorisation (for infrastructure managers);
- investigating incidents and complaints to find out why failures have occurred and if the law has been broken;
- using structured sampling and auditing techniques to discover how the duty holder applies their safety-management system, and how they manage risk and change;
- using our policies to influence duty holders and other interested parties (for example, local and national government);
- advising the industry on good practice and new developments in health and safety matters;
- gathering and analysing information on the performance of duty holders to help guide our monitoring and decision-making;
- using our formal enforcement powers and prosecution in line with our [enforcement policy statement](#).

What we expect from duty holders

We expect duty holders to do the following:

- keep to all relevant health and safety law, including;
 - i. carrying out risk assessments and introducing appropriate control measures to make sure their work is safe; and
 - ii. developing, monitoring, auditing, updating and reviewing the effectiveness of their safety-management systems and their health and safety arrangements;

- promote a culture where health and safety principles are considered during planning and decision-making processes so health and safety performance can continually improve;
- work with other duty holders to identify and reduce risks where their activities comes into contact or overlap with each other;
- work with manufacturers, suppliers and other duty holders to make sure new technology is fit for its intended purpose before it is introduced;
- have effective arrangements for considering safety before putting new or altered vehicles, or infrastructure, into service.