

12 May 2016

## **Another good year for railway safety, but there's more to be done**

The Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) has published its Annual Report for 2015. For the eighth time in a row this report has been able to record that there have been no train accidents involving a passenger fatality, and the UK railways remain among the safest in Europe.

Simon French, RAIB's Chief Inspector, said:

"This is good news for both passengers and people working on the railway. However, continuation of the railway industry's excellent safety performance is dependent on vigilance and a willingness to address the types of gaps in safety systems that are identified by our investigations. Our investigations over the last year have identified a number of recurrent concerns, particularly those associated with the safety of track workers, track quality, the condition of some freight trains and the safety of passengers when boarding and alighting from trains.

"We have investigated several accidents in which multiple fatalities were only narrowly avoided, including a track gang's narrow escape from a train travelling 98 mph and a steam hauled charter train passing a signal at danger before coming to a stand across a high speed junction.

"These events, and a number of catastrophic accidents in Europe, highlight why thorough and impartial accident investigation continues to play an important role in helping the railway industry to identify, and then close, gaps in the railway's safety defences.

"The Annual Report notes that the railway industry is carrying out a wide range of initiatives to improve safety, many of which are linked to our safety recommendations. It is pleasing to learn that the vast majority of our recommendations have led to action to address safety risk."

During 2015, RAIB:

- deployed to 32 accidents and incidents
- started 21 investigations and one joint investigation with our French equivalent
- issued three safety bulletins and five urgent safety advice notices
- published 20 reports and made 74 recommendations

Simon French continued:

"In 2016 the Branch will continue to develop new and effective ways of communicating our findings so that people working in the railway industry – whether on freight or passenger trains, tracks or signals, metro or mainline – can learn from what happened and prevent similar accidents in future."

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1. The RAIB Annual Report is available on gov.uk [link]
2. RAIB Chief Inspector Simon French is available for comment.
3. For media enquiries, call 01932 440015.
4. The Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) independently investigates accidents to improve railway safety, and inform the industry and the public.