

What evidence is the RAIB looking for?

Evidence about the cause of the accident may come from a number of different sources including the trains, the track, the signalling system and other infrastructure items, or maintenance, design and training documents.

It may also be in different forms, including damaged equipment, data from monitoring equipment on trains and in the signalling system, or records relating to operations and maintenance.

Who is responsible for evidence?

The RAIB will share physical and documentary evidence relating to the investigation with other bodies - including the police, COPFS and the Safety Authority*. However, it will not disclose to anyone evidence obtained from people who have given witness statements to its inspectors.

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More detailed information about how the RAIB protects the identity of witnesses and their statements can be found in Leaflet 02 - Your Witness Statement.

Download at www.gov.uk/raib

What are the RAIB's powers?

The powers of the RAIB and its Inspectors - and the framework for reporting and investigating accidents - are set out in the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 and the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005. The RAIB Inspectors have the power to:

- enter railway property, land or vehicles;
- seize anything relating to the accident and make records;
- require access to and disclosure of records and information; and
- require people to answer questions and provide information about anything relevant to the investigation.

How does the RAIB make the details of its investigations known?

The RAIB publishes reports on every accident it investigates, either in formal reports on a specific

accident or incident, or in periodic publications when there are no urgent safety issues.

The RAIB may produce an interim report during an investigation when it wants to communicate early information that may be useful to others. These publications are available on the RAIB website.

Additionally, the RAIB may issue safety advice shortly after the accident or at any other time during an investigation if it discovers, during an investigation, that something needs to be done urgently to make railways safer.

How do the reports affect the railway industry?

Ordinarily, the RAIB's reports make recommendations on actions that it believes are needed to improve railway safety. These recommendations have to be addressed, by law, to the relevant safety authorities and other public bodies as appropriate even though they may not be the end implementer.

The safety authorities have a responsibility to ensure the RAIB's recommendations are considered by the end implementer and appropriate action is taken by them. The RAIB's recommendations can be directed at railway companies, government bodies and anyone else who has a role that affects how the railways are run.

How do I contact the RAIB?

Should you have any questions about the RAIB or its investigations, please contact the RAIB using the information below.

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Guidance on the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005 can be found at www.gov.uk/raib

An introduction to the RAIB

Leaflet 01

Rail Accident Investigation Branch

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What is the RAIB?

The Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) is the independent railway accident investigation organisation for the UK.

The RAIB is concerned with the investigation of accidents and incidents on:

- the national railway networks in Great Britain and Northern Ireland;
- the Channel Tunnel (in co-operation with its equivalent operation in France);
- the London and Glasgow Underground systems and other metro systems;
- light rail and tramways;
- heritage railways (including narrow-gauge systems over 350mm gauge); and
- cable-hauled systems of 1km or longer.

The purpose of an RAIB investigation is to improve the safety of railways, and to prevent further accidents from occurring.

The RAIB achieves this by identifying the causes of accidents along with any other factors that contributed to the event or made the outcome worse, such as technical or operational factors or those arising from management systems.

The RAIB's investigations are entirely independent and are focused solely on safety improvement.

The RAIB does not apportion blame or liability nor enforce law or carry out prosecutions.

Why was the RAIB formed?

The formation of an organisation to independently investigate railway accidents with the aim of improving safety was recommended in Lord Cullen's inquiry report on the Ladbroke Grove rail accident in 1999.

The RAIB was established by the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003. The Act enabled the Secretary of State to make detailed provision in regulations - the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005 - about the RAIB's powers and duties, the scope of its work and dealings with other people and organisations involved in rail accidents. The Regulations enabled the RAIB to become operational.

The establishment of the RAIB also fulfils the UK's duty to provide an independent rail accident investigation body under the European Railway Safety Directive (2004/49/EC).

How is the RAIB organised?

The RAIB is independent of the railway industry, safety regulators and prosecution bodies. Like the Air and Marine Accident Investigation Branches (AAIB and MAIB) the RAIB forms part of the Department for Transport, but is functionally independent: the Chief Inspector reports on accident investigations directly to the Secretary of State for Transport.

Where is the RAIB based?

The RAIB has operational centres in Derby and Farnborough. These locations enable the RAIB Investigators to respond as quickly as possible to accidents occurring in any part of the UK.

What accidents do the RAIB investigate?

The RAIB must by law investigate all rail accidents involving a derailment or collision which result in, or could result in:

- the death of at least one person;
- serious injury to five or more people; or
- extensive damage to rolling stock, the infrastructure or the environment.

The RAIB may also investigate other incidents which have implications for railway safety, including those which under slightly different circumstances may have led to an accident.

Who notifies the RAIB about an accident?

When an accident happens, the obligation to notify the RAIB is on those railway industry bodies (railway infrastructure managers, railway operators or maintainers) whose staff or property is involved in an accident or incident.

How does the RAIB respond to a notification?

If an accident or incident occurs, the RAIB will decide its response, which will be influenced by:

- whether the investigation is mandated by law;
- whether there is important evidence at the scene;
- whether it is part of a trend; or
- the safety issues at stake.

The response will range from immediate dispatch of Inspectors to the site, attendance and follow-up after the infrastructure is cleared (eg a maintenance depot), through to overseeing the direction of others carrying out an investigation.

The RAIB can appoint others to assist them in an investigation, including Accredited Agents, who may assist in recording evidence at the accident site, and specialist services.



More detailed information about Accredited Agents can be found in Leaflet 03 - An introduction to Accredited Agents.

Download at www.gov.uk/raib

Who carries out the RAIB investigations?

To carry out its investigations the RAIB has appointed and trained Inspectors recruited from the railway industry and other investigating bodies. They are experienced, have a broad mixture of skills across the railway industry and have been trained in investigation techniques. All inspectors carry an RAIB identity card.

What happens at the accident site?

Following an accident, a number of investigations may be started by different organisations. The objectives of these investigations are different.

The RAIB provides a focus and lead for the technical investigation into the causes and consequences of the accident. However, the roles of the police, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COFPS) in Scotland, and the Safety Authority* are not changed by the existence of the RAIB. These agencies may investigate to find out if there has been a breach of the law.

The RAIB's investigations normally involve Inspectors visiting the accident scene, assessing what has happened and gathering the evidence needed to find the cause.

As part of collecting evidence from the scene, the RAIB Inspectors may take statements from people who witnessed the accident.

*The Safety Authorities in the UK are: the Office of Rail and Road (ORR); the Northern Ireland Department (NID); and the Intergovernmental Commission (IGC).