

Policy on managing the risks that come about as a result of people's mistakes

Introduction

UK railways are very safe, and the actions of rail staff contribute to this good record. However, accidental mistakes made by people who design, manage, run and use the railway can put other people's health and safety at risk.

Rail safety has been and continues to be improved significantly by removing the risks that come about as a result of mistakes people have made. But it is also very important to develop solutions which focus on understanding why people make mistakes and how we can work with people to improve safety.

In this policy, we use the word 'mistake' in its everyday sense, rather than in the technical sense used by human-factors experts.

We recognise the following.

- Rail companies have a clear duty under health and safety laws to manage the risks that come about as a result of mistakes people have made.
- Rail staff have a duty under health and safety laws to keep to the systems and procedures rail companies put in place to manage the risks that come about as a result of mistakes people have made.
- There are many factors that affect people's actions and behaviour and that may cause them to make mistakes. These factors include:
 - the tasks they have to carry out;
 - the design of the equipment they have to use;
 - their own capabilities; and
 - the way their work is organised.

Together, these factors are known as 'human factors'.

- Rail companies have already done a lot to remove or manage the safety risks from mistakes people have made, and continue to look for other ways to make improvements.

What we believe

- Identifying and managing safety risks as a result of people's mistakes must be a vital part of every rail company's safety management system.
- To effectively manage the safety risks that come about from people's mistakes, rail companies must fully understand, as far as they can, the main causes of these mistakes.



What we expect rail companies to do

- Keep to their legal duty to manage the safety risks from mistakes people have made.
- Take a consistent approach to managing these safety risks.
- Effectively investigate incidents to identify the main causes of people's mistakes.
- Identify and apply good practice to managing mistakes people have made, including good practice from other industries and other countries.
- As appropriate, carry out research into why people make mistakes, and contribute to and take part in research programmes carried out across the whole rail industry.
- Fully consult their staff and staff representatives to help identify problems and develop solutions to these problems.

What we will do

- We will prioritise our activities based on the evidence we gather and our assessment of the risks.
- We will promote the importance of effectively considering human factors in designing, managing, running and using railway equipment and processes.
- We will continue to share with rail companies our expertise on the influence of human factors on people's behaviour.
- We will work with rail companies and other organisations to develop and promote good practice in managing human factors.