

The Annual Report of Health and Safety on Britain's Railways from the ORR – key takeaways

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By Onwave

The recent Annual Report of Health and Safety on Britain's Railways from the ORR highlights the challenges faced by the railway industry in Britain and the efforts being made to adapt and address them.

The key points made include:

Ambitious reform

Proposals are being developed to create a new guiding body, Great British Railways (GBR), for the mainline railway. Uncertainty during this process emphasizes the importance of holding the industry accountable for maintaining a safe and healthy railway.

Network Rail is committed to modernising its practices with a focus on understanding health and safety

risks and ensuring safe implementation.

Climate change risks

Climate change risks such as extreme weather, are being addressed, and efforts are ongoing to implement recommendations from accidents, such as the Carmont fatal accident.

Technology to keep people safe

The use of technology and innovation offers opportunities to design out risks and improve safety, and efforts are being made to promote health and safety thinking in the design stage of projects.

There is a need for improved industry capability in introducing and operating new technologies, ensuring risk controls are well aligned, Network Rail have introduced new protections to improve track worker safety, but implementing this technology needs to go further, faster, and properly involve the end user staff, to drive their buy-in.

Leadership for change management

Leadership and supporting the well-being of railway personnel are crucial during times of change, with a focus on improving fatigue management and providing adequate facilities for staff.

Occupational Health

Progress in health management is being made, with improved occupational health services and the need to address long latency diseases like HAVS and RCS. These illnesses are caused by asbestos and the inhalation of toxic fumes from welding equipment.

On track Plant

There is room for improvement around the management of on track plant – with several incidents occurring over the past few years including Calverley in 2018 and Bellhouse 2021. OWL geofencing is a technology that is able to prevent people/plant interface and

Collaboration with stakeholders

The report addresses policy developments, including potential implications of the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill, and efforts to reform legislation and enhance collaboration with stakeholders.

OWL geofencing wearables

Our OWL geofencing devices have received Network Rail Approval to keep track workers safe. We are working with both Network Rail and their contractors to roll out this technology – [Contact Onwave here](#).