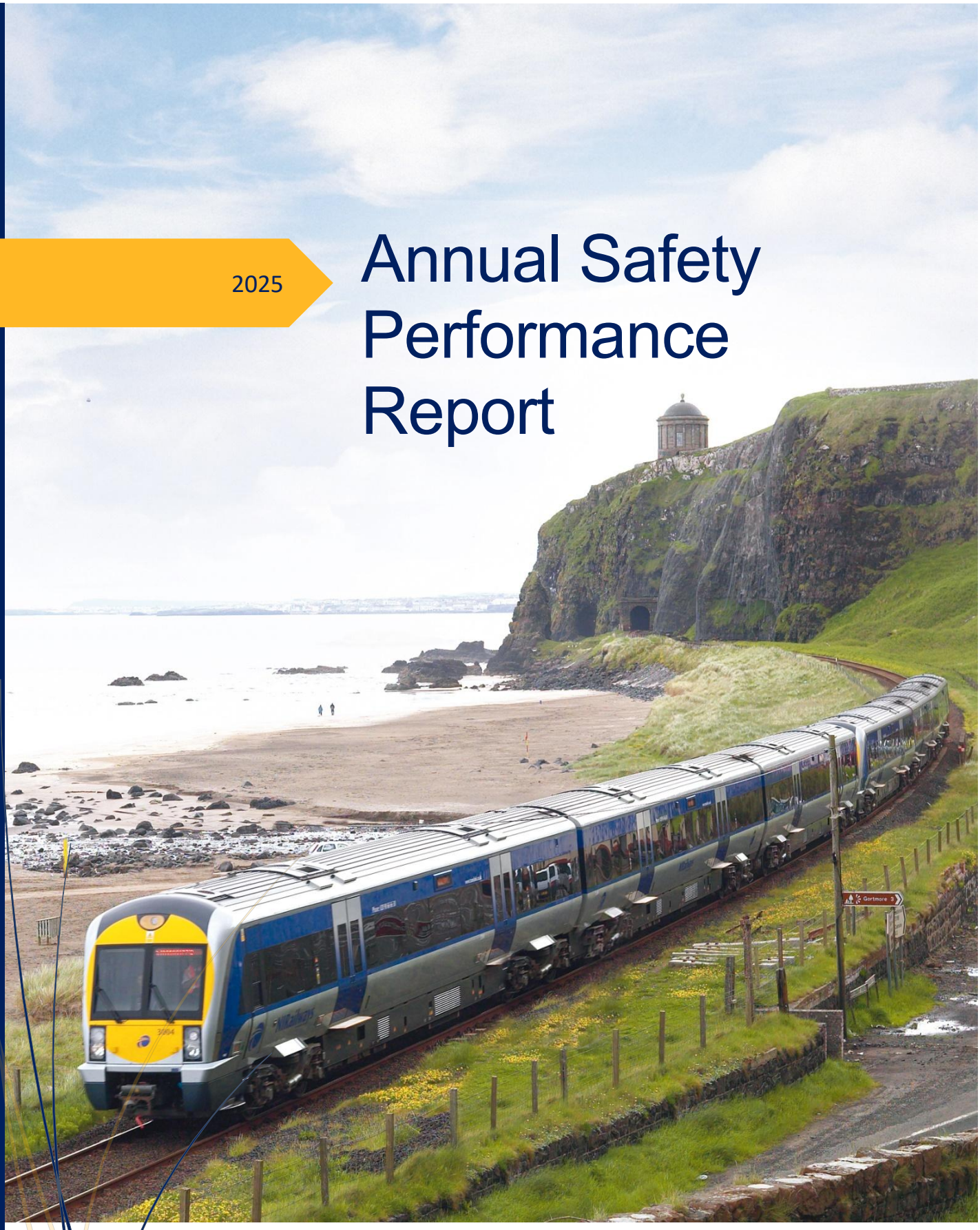
2025

Annual Safety Performance Report



Department for Infrastructure
An Roinn Bonneagair
Depairtment fur Infrastructure
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Summary

This annual safety report, published by the Rail Safety Authority (RSA) in the Department for Infrastructure (the Department) provides an overview of rail safety activity within Northern Ireland (NI) during 2025.

Overall, the total number of incidents and accidents remained quite low in 2025, with no fatalities recorded. There were 2 precursors to accidents/ incidents in 2025 which is a significant decrease from 12 in 2024.

Our focus for railway safety in 2025 was on Train Crew Competence with an inspection carried out in October 2025 along with colleagues from ORR, final report was issued to Translink in March 2026. While the report identified a few areas where improvements could be made, it recognised that Translink's current methodology along with proposed enhancements represent a credible and progressive evolution aligned with guidance and recognised industry practice.

RSA also conducted Low Rail Adhesion inspections and interviews in 2025, and the final report was issued to Translink in April 2026. The review identified several areas where improvements would enhance governance, and organisational resilience could be strengthened but that NIR has established and generally maintains effective operational measures for identifying, managing, and responding to Low Rail Adhesion.

Throughout 2025, the RSA took forward regular engagement with railway operators on their progress in meeting safety targets and implementing the recommendations of inspection reports.

Going forward, the RSA will continue to work with railway operators to monitor and support their safety activity and undertake targeted activity as part of its monitoring and supervision programme.

1. Introduction

1.1. This annual safety performance report for the NI rail network is based on the activities of the RSA as National Safety Authority (NSA) for NI, as well as the information supplied by the two mainline railway operators in NI, Northern Ireland Railways NIR and Iarnród Éireann (IÉ). Both NIR and IÉ submitted an annual safety report to the RSA for 2025 as required under regulation 18(1) of the Railways (Safety Management) Regulations (NI) 2006 (as amended) (the 2006 Regulations).

1.2. It is important to note that while both mainline operators run cross-border services between Belfast and Dublin, the information presented in this report, specifically the Common Safety Indicators (CSI) data at section 4, relates to activities on the NI network.

1.3. This report covers the period from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025 and is concerned with the mainline railway system of NI.

NI Rail Network

1.4. Translink is the brand name of the integrated public transport operation of NIR as well as Metro and Ulsterbus. NIR acts as both infrastructure manager (IM) and railway undertaking (RU) or train operating company. NIR operates all mainline domestic services on the NI network and jointly operates the Belfast to Dublin Enterprise service with IÉ.

1.5. The Department provides funding to maintain and develop the rail infrastructure and rolling stock. This activity is structurally separate from the delivery of its statutory duties as NSA.

1.6. IÉ operates as an RU in NI. A subsidiary of Córas Iompair Éireann, IÉ provides passenger and freight rail services in Ireland as well as operating Rosslare Europort. IÉ jointly operates the Dublin to Belfast Enterprise service with NIR and does not operate any domestic services on the NI rail network.

1.7. All railway operators in NI, including heritage railways, are required to comply with railway safety regulations. In some circumstances, heritage railways operating on their dedicated tracks and at a line speed that does not exceed 25mph (40kph) may be exempted from some regulations where the Department is satisfied that the safety of passengers and the general public is not compromised.

National Safety Authority

1.8. Rail safety is a devolved matter in NI. The Department carries out the role of the NSA for NI (RSA) and is responsible for ensuring railway operators' regulatory compliance with the rail safety regulatory framework. The Department does this in accordance with the Railway Safety Act (Northern Ireland) 2002 and associated Regulations. The main legislative framework for rail safety in NI is set out at Annex A.

1.9. The Department's key responsibilities as Safety Authority are:

- To ensure that railway operators manage the rail network efficiently and in a way that meets the needs of users;
- To encourage continuous improvement in health and safety performance;
- To secure compliance with relevant health and safety law, including taking enforcement action as necessary;
- To develop policy and enhance relevant railway health and safety legislation; and
- To issue or refuse safety certificates to railway operators in accordance with the relevant Regulations.

1.10. The statutory functions of the RSA in the Department are exercised by Rail Safety Branch. The Branch is responsible for the monitoring and supervision of railway operators' safety management systems and for conducting audits and inspections of the application and practical deployment of safety management systems.

1.11. The Branch also acts as the Competent Authority for interoperability on the rail system. Interoperability is a mainly reserved matter, with the Department for Transport (DfT) legislating on behalf of NI in this area. The RSA works closely with DfT on issues relating to interoperability and engages with them more broadly on rail safety matters.

1.12. The RSA also works with the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), the NSA for Great Britain (GB), to secure technical support to assist with the discharge of its statutory functions, and with the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI), which undertakes statutory functions concerning rail safety and interoperability, and also supports the RSA in the discharge of its functions.

1.13. The RSA partners with the Commission for Rail Regulation (CRR), the NSA for the rail network in Ireland. Through this partnership the two NSA explore opportunities for joint monitoring and supervision activities to manage the regulatory burden on cross border service operators.

1.14. As a result of EU Exit and the continuing requirement under the Windsor Framework and Ireland/Northern Ireland (NI) Protocol for NI to adhere to the EU's rail technical standards regime, the Department will continue to publish the required information for NI only.

1.15. Previous UK wide annual safety reports developed by ORR and submitted to the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA) prior to EU Exit, which include NI information and statistics, are available on ERA's website.

2. Legislative Framework

The Railways (Safety Management) Regulations (NI) 2006

2.1. The purpose of the 2006 Regulations when introduced was to harmonise safety standards. The 2006 Regulations impose prohibitions and requirements in relation to the safety of NI's railways and cover the following key areas:

- Requirements for safety management systems, safety certificates and safety authorisations;
- Risk assessment, co-operation and reporting requirements; and
- Requirements relating to safety critical work.

Reporting Requirements

2.2. Under regulation 18 of the 2006 Regulations, railway operators in NI are required to send to the Department an annual safety report relating to the previous calendar year which contains the following information:

- information on how any railway operator's safety targets are met;
- the results achieved through putting any railway operator's safety plans into effect;
- statistics for relevant CSIs;
- the findings of internal safety auditing carried out; and
- comments on any deficiencies or malfunctions relating to the running of vehicles or the management of infrastructure relating to the operation in question that may be relevant to the safety of any railway.

2.3. The Department is then required to publish a report which includes the following:

- the development of railway safety including an aggregation of all the statistics reported to the Department for the relevant calendar year relating to CSIs which relate to an operation or part of an operation which is carried out on the railway;
- any important changes in relation to the regulation of railway safety;
- the development of the system for safety certification and authorisation; and
- the results of and experience relating to the supervision of railway operators.

2.4. Whilst the Department is not required under the current NI legislation to provide information on the experience of the RUs and IMs on the

application of the relevant Common Safety Methods (CSMs), we have included this information in previous reports.

2.5. The 2006 Regulations currently state that the Department must send this annual report to ORR. ORR previously represented NI in its relations with ERA and included NI specific information within a wider UK report. However, as a result of legislative amendments following EU Exit, there are now different reporting requirements for GB and NI. The relevant GB legislation does not provide a mandate for ORR to receive NI safety performance information. Consequently, the RSA will now publish this information for NI only.

EU Legislation and Standards

2.6. Under the Windsor Framework/NI Protocol, the Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSIs) continue to have direct effect in NI. The recast Rail Interoperability Directive 2016/797 applies in NI "insofar as conditions and technical specifications for placing on the market, putting into service and free movement of railway products are concerned."[1] To meet the requirements of the Windsor Framework/NI Protocol, during 2021, DfT announced the development secondary legislation to implement for NI the relevant provisions of 2016/797, and work to develop this legislation took place in 2022. In the interim, the RSA engaged with DfT to apply Windsor Framework/NI Protocol requirements in the NI context as required.

2.7. The provisions of the Railways (Interoperability) Regulations 2011 (as amended) continue to apply in NI in the context of the continued applicability of Directive 2016/797 detailed above.

Legislative Changes and Developments in 2025

Domestic Legislative Developments

2.8. The RSA published the final report on the review of rail safety in 2025. The review examines the role, remit, functions, structure, processes and systems to ensure that the DfI rail safety responsibilities in NI are fit for purpose in a post EU Exit operating environment. The Rail Safety Review has resulted in the development of proposals for a Rail Safety and Transport Bill. A consultation on the Bill proposals was conducted in the final quarter of 2025. Due to the scale of policy work required and limited Assembly time remaining, the intention is to bring forward a fully developed Bill early in the next mandate.

[1] Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol, Annex 2, paragraph 28.

EU Legislative Developments

2.9. In November 2025, the EU introduced new legislation covering the allocation of rail capacity. While this legislation does not apply in Northern Ireland, it will apply to how the Infrastructure Manager for the rail network in Ireland allocates capacity to cross-border services. The EU legislation will be phased in over the next few years, and it is designed to support the rail freight sector on mainland Europe. It is unlikely to impact day-today operations in 2026.

3. Development of Railway Safety

3.1. Railway safety in 2025 remained broadly consistent with previous years, with accidents and precursors to accidents remaining in low numbers. Further details on CSIs are provided in section 4.

NSA Activities

3.2. The post EU Exit environment continues to pose a challenge for the RSA, with significant resources dedicated to developing and managing the applicable standards and to engaging with key stakeholders to share developments and enhance knowledge.

3.3. Regular engagement with partner organisations and industry stakeholders has continued in 2025 to ensure collaboration and sharing of information takes place in a timely manner, and so joint working can be agreed and undertaken as required.

3.4. The RSA also continued to develop informal links with other organisations, such as the Rail Safety and Standards Board, to enhance knowledge and understanding of wider developments in the rail safety and standards arena.

Mainline Operators - Inspection, Audit and Supervision

3.5. To undertake any programme of audit and inspection, the RSA draws on the technical support and advice of railway engineers, fleet engineers and health and safety experts from ORR or the HSENI. The RSA then works with the designated technical experts to develop a remit for each audit and inspection.

Leadership and Culture

3.6. The Infrastructure Manager (IM) and the Railway Undertaking (RU) is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for employees, contractors, customers, and members of the public.

3.7. The IM actively manage safety risks associated with the renewal, maintenance and inspection of assets as well as changes to infrastructure, the introduction of new products and organisational change.

3.8. The RU has implemented Divisional policies, procedures and instructions in line with the 14 Safety, Health and Environmental Management principles.

3.9. Both IM and RU operate a Safety Management System (SMS) which consists of a suite of documentation, procedures, registers and records that document the activities used for effective management of the system. The SMS also identifies senior management responsibilities and outlines the SH&E Principles. The system assures conformance to legal and other obligations by making each Translink division responsible for implementing a framework of policies and procedures which adhere to the 14 SH&E Principles.

Train Crew Competence Inspections

3.10. The RSA commenced a programme of train crew competence inspections supported by experts from ORR.

3.11. The programme consisted of an inspection of Translink NI Railway's (NIR) Competence Management System (CMS) for train crew, with a focus on cross-border Enterprise operations. This review formed part of the RSA's risk-led rolling inspection programme following the recertification of NIR's Safety Management System in February 2024.

3.12. The inspection involved document review, interviews and on-site observations to evaluate how the CMS ensures safe, compliant and proficient train operations. The assessment was benchmarked against ORR's RSP1 guidance, considering both the current framework and proposed enhancements.

3.13. The inspection found NIR's approach to competence management to be structured and matured, supported by established training, monitoring and verification processes. Driver professionalism and organisational commitment to safety were evident, and the proposed new CMS aligns with industry best practice, particularly in developing non-technical skills and digitalising processes.

3.14. Several areas for improvement were identified –

- Need to digitise competence records;
- Formalise route learning;
- Clarify communication channels;
- Strengthen change-management around external recruitment;
- Enhancing human factors expertise is recommended to better integrate behavioural safety into competence assessment.

Low Rail Adhesion

3.15. RSA inspected NIR's arrangements for managing Low Rail Adhesion (LRA) across the network between September and December 2025.

3.16. The review assessed the effectiveness of NIR's Safety Management System (SMS), operational controls, maintenance practices and staff competencies in mitigating LRA-related safety risks.

3.17. The inspection found that NIR has established and generally maintains effective operational measures for identifying, managing and responding to LRA. These include robust driver briefings, data-driven planning, established railhead treatment processes, and clear communication arrangements across both the RU and IM functions.

3.18. Staff demonstrated strong operational awareness and adherence to procedures, with evidence of consistent application of key controls.

3.19. The review did highlight several areas where improvements would enhance governance, and organisational resilience could be strengthened. These relate to the absence of a single overarching LRA management document within the SMS, constraints with training delivery (particularly non-technical skills), delays in closing and communicating incident outcomes, resource pressures within track maintenance teams and NIR's current dependency on a single Multi-Purpose Vehicle for railhead treatment.

3.20. Additionally, opportunities exist to explore innovation to support real-time adhesion awareness and long-term risk reduction.

3.21. Seven recommendations have been issued to support continuous improvement centred on:

- Strengthening SMS governance;
- Evaluation fleet and asset investment;
- Improving training delivery;
- Enhancing incident-closure communication;
- Reviewing operational timetable flexibility;
- Exploring staff-generated proposals for technological innovation.

Monitoring and Supervision

3.22. The RSA continued to engage with railway operators to undertake monitoring and supervision activities in 2025. Hybrid and in-person meetings were undertaken as public health guidelines changed. Follow-up activity was also undertaken between meetings to monitor the implementation of the audit recommendations.

Previous Inspections

3.23. The reports from previous years with outstanding or long-term recommendations (structures asset management and user worked level crossings) continued to be monitored.

3.24. The Programme of Level Crossing safety improvements continued throughout 2025 which included the closure of three crossings and another crossing converted to a railway-controlled crossing ending agricultural use.

3.25. The 'Platform Train Interface' Inspection final report was issued in 2025, and initiatives continued to be implemented to reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls for both staff and passengers. For NIR, this included completing the training and competence of train dispatchers on PTI risk assessments and station dispatch plans.

3.26. The 'Management of Contractors' Inspection report was issued in 2025, and NIR have taken steps towards compliance with the eight recommendations to further improve the approach to contractor management.

New Products Risk Evaluation and Review

3.27. New products for use on the railway are being reviewed in line with the Common Safety Method for Risk Evaluation and Assessment (CSM RA) and in line with current Interoperability Regulations. Risk Assessments, hazard identification workshops and documentary evidence of closure of hazards/ risks and actions taken to either eliminate or mitigate the risk are documented and approved by the appropriate Professional Head/ Head of Department. Final approval is authorised by the Head of Rail Infrastructure Engineering. All new products are also subject to review the newly established Systems Review and Approval Panel (SRAP), which provides an additional layer of internal assurance and scrutiny before any product in introduced to the railway network.

3.28. Work to introduce composite sleepers to the NIR network commenced in 2024 and continued throughout 2025. A comprehensive HAZID workshop identified the key hazards, risks and required control measures associated with the procurement, installation and maintenance.

3.29. Change Management activity remains ongoing, with the Change Team working closely with the proposing departments. This includes supporting the development of the technical specification and ensuring that the sleepers are designed, manufactured, tested and procured in full alignment with the relevant standards, assurance requirements and governance processes.

RIDDOR Reportable Incidents

3.30. Translink noted that there were seven RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997) reportable incidents in 2025 – further details are provided below. Translink took remedial action as required. The RSA are currently investigating one of these incidents.

Railway Operator Activities

3.31. Railway operators continued to set and monitor safety targets, with regular reporting and reviews to ensure mitigations are developed as appropriate. Safety performance trends were closely monitored and reported periodically within each operator and to the RSA.

3.32. Overarching safety plans were also developed, with the aim of driving continuous improvement in the safety of the railways. In order to achieve this, both operators undertook recognised industry approaches such as the following:

- Independent external audits;
- Compliance verification;
- Internal audits;
- Safety tours, planned general inspections and management reviews;
- Action plans responding to regulatory inspections;
- Responding to issues raised through regulator safety performance meetings;
- Progress with actions from accident investigations and audits reviewed at safety meetings;
- Performance indicators and progress on safety actions are periodically reported and reviewed at safety meetings.

Railway Operator Priorities, Targets Set and Outcomes

3.33. This section focuses on the targets set by, and the activity of, NIR as it relates solely to the NI rail network. Where IÉ has highlighted similar issues to NIR, this is noted in the relevant section.

3.34. The main areas of focus for safety activity across the NI network in 2025 has been passenger and staff safety, the platform train interface, operational and fleet safety, and safety at level crossings.

3.35. NIR has set a range of targets across IM and RU operations. These are detailed below.

Passenger Accidents

2024 Target	2024Target Outcome	2025 Target	2025Target Outcome	Year on Year Change
≤ 110	88	≤ 110	92	+4

- Of the 92 incidents, 27 resulted in passenger injuries.
- Minor Injury Class 2: 22
- Minor Injury Class 1: 5

Workforce Safety

Key risk area	2024 Target	2024 Target Outcome	2025Target	2025Target Outcome	Year on Year Change
Rail Operations Staff Accidents (including Contractors)	≤ 12	17	≤ 12	12	-5
Rail Fleet Engineering Staff Accidents (including Contractors)	≤ 12	14	≤ 12	6	-8
Employee Assaults (including Contractors)	No target set	16	No target set	17	+1
Staff Fatalities	0	0	0	0	0

- **Rail Operations staff accidents (including contractors)** – One incident was RIDDOR reportable, but none were classed as a major injury.
- **Rail Fleet Engineering staff accidents (including contractors)** – None of these injuries were RIDDOR reportable and none were classed as a major injury. All accidents were investigated, and all relevant risk assessments and safe systems of work reviewed by Rail Risk Committee.
- **RU employee assaults (including contractors)** – Physical assaults to staff showed a slight increase on the previous year. However, a review of longer-term trends demonstrates a significant reduction over the past five financial years. This has been achieved in part due to wider use of body-worn CCTV cameras, and the 'Think Again' poster campaign to inform the public around staff abuse and Translink's Zero Tolerance Policy.

Key risk area	2024 Target	2024 Target Outcome	2025 Target	2025 Target Outcome	Year on Year Change
Infrastructure Manager Weighted Serious Injuries	0	0	0	1	+1
Infrastructure Manager Staff Accidents including Contractors (RIDDOR)	3% improvement on 5-year average	2	3% improvement on 5-year average	5	+3
Infrastructure Manager Staff Accidents including Contractors (Minor)	3% improvement on 5-year average	26	3% improvement on 5-year average	24	-2
Infrastructure (T3, T2 and Red Zone PAC Inspections)	Ensuring increase in PAC activity in line with an increase in possessions and project activities on the network	T3: 286 T2: 36 Red Zone: 8	Ensuring increase in PAC activity in line with an increase in possessions and project activities on the network	T3: 330 T2: 51 Red Zone: 21	T3: +44 T2: +15 Red Zone: +13

Infrastructure Worksite Safety Inspections and Visits	Ensuring increase in PAC activity in line with an increase in possessions and project activities on the network	293	Ensuring increase in PAC activity in line with an increase in possessions and project activities on the network	361	+68

- **IM Weighted Serious Injuries** – Contractor supervisor sustained a leg injury through a trip injury causing a ruptured left quadricep tendon requiring surgery. This incident was reported to HSENI as a RIDDOR Major Injury but is not included below to avoid duplicate reporting.
- **IM Staff Accidents including Contractors (RIDDOR)** – There were 5 RIDDOR Accidents in 2025 with the following breakdown –

  1 RIDDOR Reportable Major Injury.

  4 RIDDOR Over 3 Day Injuries.

  It is worth noting that none of these accidents resulted in the Injured Party spending over 24 hours in hospital.

  5-year average = 4.4 therefore 3% Improvement = 4.27
- **IM Staff Accidents including Contractors (Minor)** – There were 24 minor accidents in 2025, a decrease of 2 compared to 26 minor accidents in 2024.

  5-year average = 21.2 therefore 3% improvement = 20.6 (these figures include 2021 during COVID pandemic)

  3-year average = 25.0 therefore 3% improvement = 24.25
- **IM Protection Assurance Coordinator (PAC) inspections** – There were 3157 worksites in 2024, this increased to 3315 worksites in 2025 (5% increase). 478 inspections/visits completed in 2025, this is a 23.8% increase from 386 completed in 2024.
- **IM Safety, Health and Environment (SH&E) assurance activities** – There were 3157 worksites in 2024 with 293 sites inspected/visited = 9.3% of sites.

  There were 3315 worksites in 2025 with 361 sites inspected/visited = 10.9% of sites.

Operational Targets

Key risk area	2024 Target	2024 Target Outcome	2025 Target	2025 Target Outcome	Year on Year Change
Category A SPADs	≤ 3	6	≤ 3	1	-5
TPWS Brake Demands (No SPAD)	≤ 6	5	≤ 6	6	+1
Failure To Call	≤ 6	9	≤ 6	8	-1
Station Overruns	≤ 10	11	≤ 10	10	-1
Wrong Side Doors Enabled	≤ 1	4	≤ 1	4	0
Stop Short	≤ 5	8	≤ 5	6	-2
Wrong Routing (Taken)	≤ 12	1	≤ 12	0	-1
Collisions	No target set	50	≤ 2.0 per 100,000km	0.38 (22 in total)	N/A (-28)
Infringement of Train Operating Rules	No target set	53	No target set	27	-26
Potential Self Harm	No target set	95	No target set	77	-18
Anti-social Behaviour	No target set	91	No target set	169	+78
Derailments	0	0	0	0	0
Level Crossings Incidents	3% improvement on 5-year average	PRC: 87 UWC: 60	3% improvement on 5-year average	PRC: 84 UWC: 35	PRC: -3 UWC: -25

- **IM – Level crossings – public road crossing (PRC) misuse** – There was a small decrease in the level of misuse of public road crossings from 2025. The 5-year average was 81.8, and the 3% target improvement on 5-year average was 79.35. It is worth noting that although the total exceeded the 5-year average target, incident rates in 2020 and 2021 were considerably lower due to Covid-related service reductions and travel restrictions, resulting in a lower overall 5-year average.

- **IM – Level crossings – user worked crossing (UWC) misuse** - There were 35 UWC misuse instances in 2025 while the 5-year average was 138.2. This significantly surpassed the 3% improvement on 5-year average target which was 134.05 incidents. Ongoing engagement with users

regarding the correct use of crossings has contributed to this reduction. In addition, increased review of train and crossing CCTV has enabled some incidents to be recategorized as normal behaviour rather than crime related.

- **RU – Category A Signals Passed At Danger (SPADs)** – Only 1 category A SPAD was reported during 2025, which was a decrease of 5 on the previous year and 2 below the annual target. The Train encountered Extreme Low Rail Adhesion and passed the signal at danger. A detailed review of SPAD management, trends and other mitigations has been undertaken including RSSB engagement, and these actions are to be taken forward as part of NIR's OPSRAM strategy.

- **RU – Collisions** – Collisions reported in 2025 was 22 which was a 56% decrease from 2024. Target outcome was 0.38 per 100,000km which was significantly under the ≤ 2.0 per 100,000km target.

- **RU** – **Potential self-harm** – Incidents of self-harm decreased in 2025 by 19%. Events monitored at the weekly operations safety meeting, location trends and details of individuals who show up frequently as intending self-harm are carried forward to multi agency forums.

- **RU** – **Anti-social behaviour (ASB)** – 169 incidents of ASB were recorded in 2025, representing an 85.7% decrease from 2024. A key driver of the change is that reporting has changed. Historically this figure included trespass at stations or halts, this was previously recorded by the Infrastructure Division. Wider use of body-worn CCTV, 'Think Again' poster campaign and Translink Zero Tolerance Policy are in circulation trying to aid with reducing this figure.

Actions Taken to Meet Targets

3.36. To meet targets on **passenger safety**, NIR continued to deliver a range of interventions throughout 2025 to reduce the risk of slip, trips and falls, including signage, automated passenger announcements, and social media campaigns. These initiatives have been designed to improve safety and regulate passenger flow to and from the platforms.

3.37. In addition, both operators undertook initiatives targeted at improving **safety for their staff and contractors**. For NIR, these included the following:

- **Geofencing Trial** – trial took place in 2025 in collaboration with the supply chain. The trial involved multiple working environments including T2 and T3 possession working to

highlight the functionality and efficient usage of the technology. The trial has progressed to the next stage looking at procurement and implementation;

- **Contractors Forum –** quarterly meeting with contractors and wider supply chain to share lessons learned and progress achieved since the previous meeting. Working groups were established and met at each edition of the forum focusing on Modernisation, Health & Wellbeing, Workplace Safety & Competence and Performance Reporting & Investigations;

- **Principal Contractor Licencing (PCL)** – following the planning and development of the new PCL Scheme in 2023 and the introduction of the scheme in 2024, there are now 9 initial Principal Contractor Licences issued to the supply chain;

- **Competency Management Framework (CMF)** – following the commencement of the CMF review in 2024, a CMF working group was established with representation from each of the IM departments to update the document to ensure continuous improvement in this area;

- **SMS Inductions** – SMS inductions were rolled out to new staff and refresher courses made available for existing staff in April;

- **Safety Management System (SMS) Review** – the annual review of the IM SMS took place in 2025. The updates comprised of inclusion of the ‘Safe Home Every Day’ strategy, update to Change Management definitions, references and processes, and updates to SHE scoring of inspections;

- **ISO45001 Certification** – the IM safety management system was assessed and certified as meeting the requirements of ISO45001 in February with zero non-conformances raised. The next surveillance audit has been scheduled for March 2026;

- **SH&E Strategy Day 2025** – the SH&E Department held their annual strategy day in March which covered a review of 2024, an overview of the ‘Better Connected’ strategy, introduction to new ‘Safe Home Every Day’ strategy, strategy development workshop, development of NIR safety critical role standards and Behavioural Safety Training;

- **SH&E Strategy (2025 – 2028)** – following the SH&E strategy Day the IM SH&E S.H.E.D was finalised replacing the '25 for 25' Strategy and was launched in April covering risk control, collaboration, efficiency, competence, health and fitness, human factors, asset protection, environment, work access, culture, supervision and standards;

- **Permanent Way Safety Day** – a Safety Day was held in April which covered a briefing on the new Defib rucksacks, launch of the Risk Assessment and Task Guidance Booklet, Occupational Health and Medicals, Take 5 steps to wellbeing and a presentation on Human Factors/Fair and Just Culture;

- **IOSH RailSTAR Management of Safety on the Railway** – following on from the introduction of the training in 2024, the RailSTAR Training Evolution Awards took place at the IOSH Railway Conference in July 2025 in which numerous IM Departments received awards for safety;

- **Emergency Response Backpack** – to improve emergency response in remote locations along the track, Permanent Way Department purchased and trained staff on emergency response backpacks specially designed for the rail industry. The backpacks include a burns module, eye module, trauma module, Heartsine Samaritan Defibrillator, dressings and bandages module, cuts and grazes module with a personal first aid kit;

- **Farm Safety Partnership (FSP) – Affiliate Membership** – Translink I&P Division were awarded the Farm Safety Partnership Affiliate Membership in April. This recognises the work with the farming community in relation to safe use of level crossings;

- **Site Inspections** – a review of the existing scored inspection form has commenced. The new site inspection form is expected to be introduced early 2026.

3.38. In terms of **operational safety**, during 2025 safety initiatives and strategic reviews were undertaken during 2025 to continuously improve safety and human performance. These included:

- Development of the 'Safe Home Every Day' strategy. Further consultation and engagement activity undertaken to strengthen shared ownership, understanding and commitment. Workshops

and employee feedback have helped shape the strategy, ensuring it reflects operational reality while enforcing a single, clear goal: everyone getting Safe Home Every Day;

- The 14 SH&E Management Principles e-learning module continues to provide accessible awareness for employees. Ongoing promotion throughout 2025 has helped reinforce consistent application of the 14 Principles;

- 2025 SH&E Conference, themed ‘Clear Signals – Enhancing Safety Through Effective Communication and Human Factors’, reinforced the importance of communication and human factors in improving safety performance;

- Strategic Safety Programme continues to embed a positive safety culture across Translink, with a strong focus on encouraging safety leadership, ownership and visible felt leadership from senior leaders;

- Operations Risk and Mitigation (OPSRAM) strategy updated to 2030. This focuses on managing operational safety risks through the effective control of Signals Passed at Danger (SPADs) and overspeed incidents, Platform Train Interface (PTI) risks, and the safe management of change. RSA reports on PTI and a RSSB SPAD management review were incorporated into the strategy;

- Operational staff briefings and safety communications were developed and issued throughout the year. These included winterisation briefings, Driver and Signallers Briefing Days and Customer Toolbox Talks. Additional safety instructions and briefings were also issued on electronic device safety, the installation of AED portable defibrillators on trains and SPAD prevention;

- The Safety Focus campaign remains a key initiative, promoting vigilance, situational awareness, management of distractions, and the importance of stopping, refocusing and thinking when unsure. The campaign continues to be supported by a structured communications approach, including online resources, a dedicated webpage, and regular briefings delivered both face-to-face and online;

- Review of rail operational staff competence management, operational communication and safety capability. Over the next two years this will include the introduction of a Digital Competence Management System (CMS) that will replace paper-based processes with a modern, data-driven platform, improving the consistency, visibility and assurance of competence across safety-critical roles. This is complemented by the deployment of secure driver tablets, enabling real-time communication, improved data integrity and confirmation that critical information has been received;

- Human factors specialist expertise to support human factors principles being embedded into competence frameworks, operational practices and decision making, with a rollout of accredited training to build internal capability;

- A Non-Technical Skills (NTS) programme that is being embedded across all levels, enhancing coaching capability, communication, leadership and investigative practice to support a stronger learning and safety culture;

- Assessment of a Joint Rail Operational Hazard Register in collaboration with Iarnród Éireann with reviews of several key NIR RU procedures, including the Business Continuity/MIMP, Accident and Investigation, Performance Monitoring and the Control Manual. Ensures operational and management alignment between both NIR RU and Iarnród Éireann RU/IM;

- A partnership with TrackSAFE, providing structured training in suicide awareness and trauma management to high-risk roles and the wider workforce;

- Fitment of LeanMind to the Class 3000 fleet. This condition-based monitoring (CBM) system is utilised by the engineering team to remotely monitor the train management system, including systems impacting passenger comfort;

- Deployment of Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) to improve public and staff access to lifesaving equipment. Installed on all Class 3000 and Class 4000 trains during 2025 and is being rolled out across the Enterprise fleet during 2026;

- The Engineering Safety Improvement Project (eSIP) continues to reinforce the key corporate messages of ‘Safety is Everyone’s Responsibility’, ‘Don’t Walk By’ and ‘Safe Home Every Day’. A Safety Focus campaign was completed in 2025 alongside a targeted slip, trip and fall awareness campaign. Task-based risk assessment groups continue to meet monthly with Health and Safety representatives, supervisors and management in attendance. Digital safety information screens were also introduced at all Fleet Engineering sites during 2025;

- Work with Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI), local councils, political parties, local schools, Irish Rail and safety representatives. The joint venture with PSNI Safe Transport Team continued in 2025 to deliver a visible, reassuring presence for staff, passengers and members of the public, whilst supporting crime prevention and anti-social behaviour across the network, at stations and on-board vehicles.

3.39. **Anti-social behaviour** has seen an increase for NIR and Irish Rail in 2025.

NIR saw incidents increase from 91 in 2024 to 169, however, this figure now incorporates trespass at stations or halts which were not previously included.

The joint venture with PSNI Safe Transport Team continued to deliver a visible, reassuring presence for staff, passengers and members of the public, whilst supporting crime prevention and anti-social behaviour, across the network, at stations and on-board vehicles.

Irish Rail saw a 19% increase in anti-social behaviour from 2024 figures, a three-year Antisocial Behaviour Strategy which was launched in 2024 that outlines the key actions and mitigations to address the rising trend of antisocial behaviour on the network.

Heritage and Tourism Operators

3.40. The heritage railways in NI operate under Section 27 of the Regulation of Railways Act 1868.

3.41. RSA granted The Railway Preservation Society of Ireland (RPSI) a mainline operator license, with the safety certificate to follow once the remaining application steps have been completed. They are currently in ongoing discussions with NIR regarding track access.

3.42. RPSI are planning to become a Training and Examination Centre and have their plan with RSA outlining the steps to achieving this in 2026.

3.43. Downpatrick and County Down were issued an application to renew their license in December with requisite site visits by RSA planned for 2026.

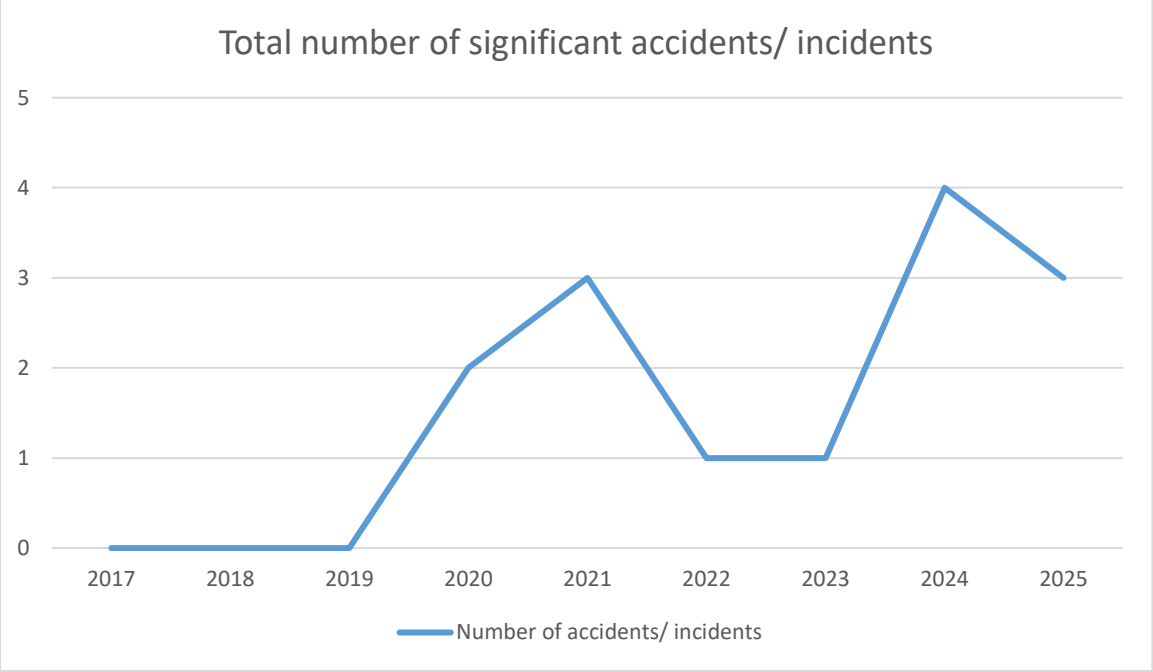
4. Key Statistics

4.1. The CSIs and key performance indicators (KPIs) in relation to accident and incident precursors have been consistently quite low in numbers and have indicated a safe rail network.

Common Safety Indicators

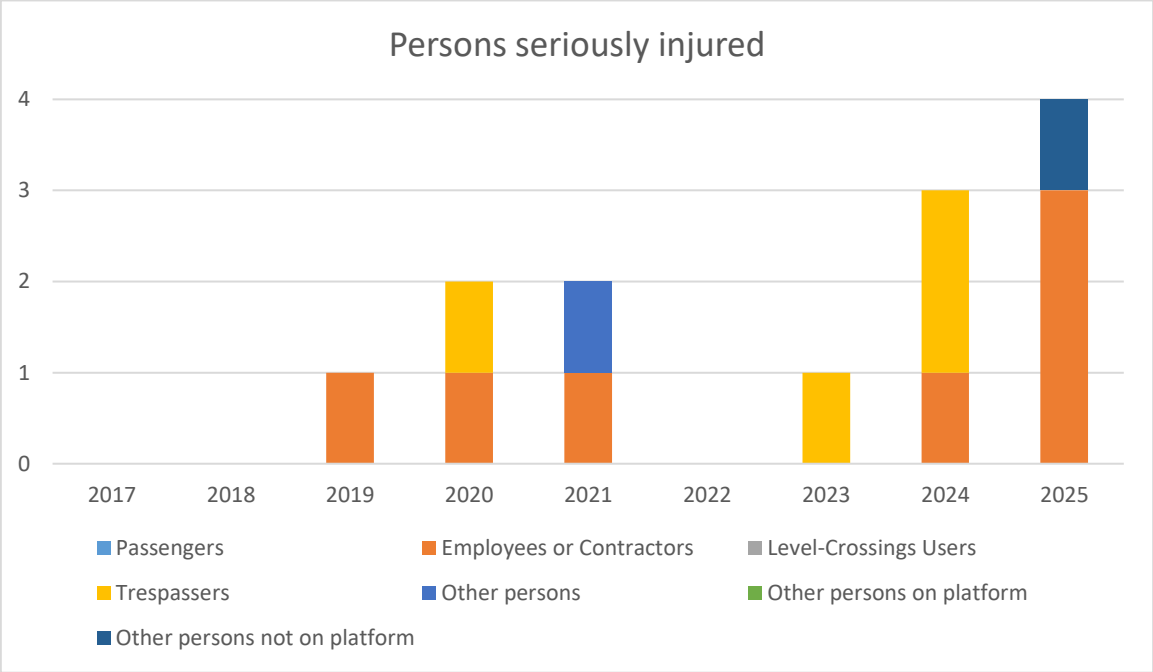
4.2. An aggregation of the statistics reported to the RSA for 2025 relating to CSIs is provided below. These statistics cover the last eight calendar years and have been provided by NIR. Overall, numbers of incidents and accidents have remained low between 2017 and 2025.

Total Number of Significant Accidents/Incidents



4.3. There were three significant accidents/incidents recorded on the NI rail network in 2025, all three were in the ‘other’ accidents category.

Persons Seriously Injured, by Category of Person

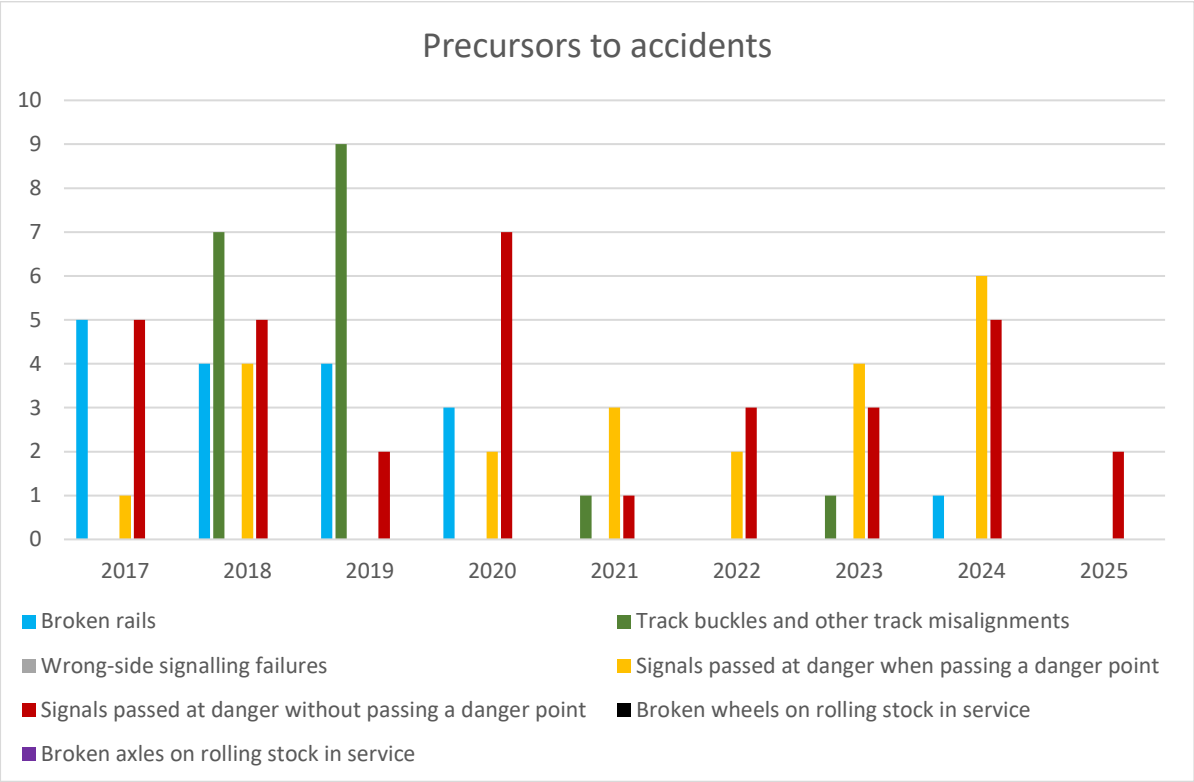


4.4. In 2025, there were 18 recorded injuries to employees or contractors on the NI rail network. All resulted in minor injuries, one was RIDDOR reportable, but none were classed as a major injury. A major injury is categorised as an injury resulting in hospitalisation for more than 24hrs.

Persons Killed, by Category of Person

4.5. There were zero fatalities as a result of an accident/ incident recorded and zero suspected fatal self-harm incidents in 2025, however, there were 7 attempted self-harm incidents.

Precursors to Accidents



4.6. There were 2 precursors to accidents recorded on the NI rail network in 2025, this is an 83% decrease on 2024 figures. Both precursors were signals passed at danger without a danger point.

Train Protection Systems

4.7. The NI rail network has a total of 333km of operational line. At the end of 2024, 98% of tracks had Train Protection Systems (TPSs) in operation providing warning. 40% of tracks had TPSs providing warning and automatic stop, and 16% of tracks had TPSs with warning, automatic stop and discrete supervision of speed.

Level Crossings

4.8. Multi-Agency inspections were completed as planned and provide an opportunity to raise issues with DfI relating to assets outside the immediate crossing footprint.

4.9. The Crossings Management Group (CMG) is an internal Translink group comprising Network Assurance, S&T, Permanent Way and General Counsel. It meets bi-monthly and focuses on reviewing Level Crossing

Performance, identifying risks, developing mitigation measures and overseeing management of Level Crossing risk.

4.10. Level Crossings Multi-Agency Group consists of NIR departments and external colleagues from PSNI Road Safety, DfI RSA, DfI Road Service and HSENI and meet on a quarterly basis. The group was established to strengthen safety performance at Level Crossings with a particular focus on road-user behaviour, enforcement activity and cross agency collaboration.

4.11. Level Crossing safety improvements continued throughout 2025, delivering the following outcomes:

- Closure of three active user-worked crossings;
- Crossing converted to a railway-controlled crossing;
- Construction commenced on a new railway overbridge which will facilitate the closure of two crossings in 2026;
- Ongoing negotiations with landowners that may result in further active and disused crossings being closed by 2027;
- Improved engagement with private crossing users has led to significant reduction in misuse incidents;
- All crossing risk assessments and maintenance inspections are up to date;
- Successful prosecutions of two users misusing a crossing;
- Transition to ALCRM-2 risk assessment model is now being used for all Level Crossing assessments. Full transition will be completed in 2027;
- Translink have partnered with the Rail Safe Friendly Programme partnership which provides online railway safety education across schools in the UK.

Major Malfunctions/Deficiencies

4.12. There have been no observations on deficiencies or malfunctions relevant to NI railway operations on the network during 2025 despite an increasing challenge from weather related events.

Other Accidents and Incidents

4.13. There were no additional incidents not mentioned previously in section 4, however Translink have provided further information on the Signal Passed at Danger incidents which was classed as Category A:

- **23/09/2025 – PD84 – Passenger Service**

  On 23rd September 2025, a passenger train passed signal PD84 at Danger without authority on the Up Dublin mainline near Lurgan. The train stopped approximately 23 metres beyond the signal. No injuries or damage occurred.

  The driver applied the train brakes after passing the previous signal at Caution, but the train was unable to stop due to extreme low rail adhesion conditions. Emergency braking and automatic sanding were deployed, however the train slid for over $1^{1/4}$ miles before coming to a stand.

  No faults were found with signalling, train equipment or driver performance. Weather was dry and leaf-fall risk was rated low.

  Investigation concluded that underlying causes contributed to extreme low rail conditions:

  - Railhead had been treated hours earlier with Interflon LeafGuard-Clean OTR, a product intended to mitigate leaf contamination. Evidence shows its presence likely significantly reduced adhesion.

  - The introduction of, use and trial of this product was benchmarked with other operating companies, including Irish Rail and Network Rail, however, this was not formally managed under Infrastructure change management procedures, which did not allow further assessment of any potential foreseeable hazards.

  - Train braking systems, although functioning correctly, could not overcome the extreme low adhesion conditions.

  The trial was suspended immediately after further evidence showed a consistent link between treated areas and poor adhesion. A recommendation has been made to the Translink NI Railways Infrastructure Division to renew their change management arrangements to ensure that any new product or process that is to be introduced is safely managed in accordance with change management procedures and processes.

Accidents/Incidents Reportable to the Rail Accident Investigation Branch

4.14. The RSA engages with NIR on their considerations of the recommendations of relevant RAIB reports and safety digests to understand how learning from incidents on the GB network is practically deployed on the NI network.

4.15. The RSA also continues to engage with railway operators on incidents which do not meet the criteria for RAIB investigation, and monitors any mitigations or improvements implemented to reduce the risk of future incidents.

5. Development of the System for Safety Certification and Authorisation

Safety Certificates and Authorisations

5.1. The 2006 Regulations set out the arrangements for safety certification and authorisation in NI.

5.2. NIR RU holds Part A and Part B safety certificates issued under the 2006 Regulations. These certificates were reissued in 2024. NIR RU also holds a railway undertaking licence, issued by the RSA, and Part A and Part B safety certificates for cross-border services issued by CRR.

5.3. NIR IM successfully obtained the Mainline Safety Authorisation Certificate along with Part A and Part B Safety Certificates from RSA in 2024.

5.4. IÉ holds a Part A safety certificate issued by CRR which the RSA has deemed a Part A certificate valid in NI, and a Part B certificate issued by the RSA.

5.5. No safety certificates were amended or revoked in 2025. No updated, amended or part safety authorisations were issued in 2025.

5.6. No requests were received from other NSAs to verify or access information relating to a Part A certificate of an RU that has been certified in the UK but applies for a Part B certificate in another EU member state.

5.7. The RSA will continue to support railway operators in developing applications for certificates and authorisations as required.

Developments/Changes

5.7. No changes to the regime for safety certification and authorisation, or changes to the strategy and procedures governing this area, were made in 2025.

5.8. The RSA continues to engage regularly with the rail sector, sharing information and feedback as required.

6. Experience of Applying Relevant Common Safety Methods

6.1. 2025 was the fifth year for which railway operators in NI were asked to provide information on their experience of applying the CSMs for risk evaluation and assessment and monitoring. It is anticipated that, for future calendar years, this feedback and analysis will develop as further experience is gained in examining the application of relevant CSMs.

Common Safety Method for Risk Evaluation and Assessment (CSM-REA)

6.2. NIR noted the following:

Railway Undertaking

- 10 technical changes relevant to fleets were assessed in line with the Engineering safety management system change control process and authorised for implementation. None of these proposed changes were deemed to be significant for the purposes of applying this CSM.

- The Joint Enterprise Fleet Replacement programme has progressed throughout 2025 and is deemed to be a significant change as per CSM-REA. Tender responses are currently being evaluated.

Infrastructure Manager

- The Change, Standards and Assurance Team have continued to expand and refine a comprehensive suite of Change Management guidance documents and templates, to support Change Proposers through each stage of the process.

- In 2025, a new Change Management Policy was drafted to replace the existing version and ensure alignment with current regulatory requirements. The draft was presented to the Technical Standards Review Meeting on 26 November, where recommended revisions were discussed. These updates will be incorporated, with the revised draft schedule for re-presentation in early 2026.

- In 2025 the IM Change Management Register contained five capital projects classed as significant under the CSM-REA:

- Belfast Transport Hub Phase 2
- NIROC Phase 1B and 1C
- Train radio upgrade
- Electrification Programme
- Lisburn West

- Established in 2025, the Systems Review and Approval Panel (SRAP) provides a structural internal assurance mechanism for reviewing and approving proposed railway system changes. Its role is to review change proposals, particularly where the significance of a change is unclear or where additional assurance is required before progressing. Its purpose is to ensure that all modifications are:

  - Safe;
  - Compliant;
  - Aligned with engineering, operational and regulatory requirements.

- The panel meets monthly, with attendance tailored to the scale and nature of the project under review. It provides a forum for expert scrutiny and informed, cross-disciplinary decision-making. SRAP supports the application of CSM REA by:

  - Providing structured scrutiny of safety implementation;
  - Ensuring alignment with the Change Management Framework;
  - Challenging the effectiveness of risk controls;
  - Overseeing monitoring outputs and governance activities.

6.3. IÉ RU noted that, during 2025, 26 applications for safety approval were submitted to the RU Safety Approvals Panel relating to 22 individual change projects. All the proposed changes were technical with no proposed organisational changes.

Common Safety Method for Monitoring

6.4. NIR monitoring arrangements take the form of a ‘three lines of defence’ model which provides the Board, Executives, Managers and external stakeholders with confidence in the levels of compliance and effectiveness of its health and safety monitoring arrangements.

6.5. Arrangements are in place to regularly monitor and evaluate the ongoing effectiveness of its SMS. A combination of safety management processes

and location audits are scheduled each year to develop the audit programme. The programme uses a risk-based approach based on safety performance indicators, findings from internal reviews, incident investigations, trend analysis and the Hazard register.

6.6. NIR RU derive information from various sources, such as findings from internal and external audits, accident and investigation reports, inspections, hierarchical checks, competence assessments and checks, safety tours, risk assessments, customer surveys, management reviews and staff reporting/feedback.

6.7. NIR has established a suite of key safety performance indicators, and trends are monitored and reviewed via TSMIS (Translink Safety Management Information System). The output of monitoring activity is captured in periodic performance reports and reviewed at forums. Performance is communicated via safety and risk management meetings, safety committees, safety briefings and newsletters.

6.8. An upgraded Safety Management Information System (Noggin) was introduced in April 2025. The key benefits of this upgraded system included:

- to improve the current incident management system to provide greater event management capabilities;
- to increase flexibility in the design of the information collected;
- to improve digitisation of the safety, health and environmental system.

6.9. Implementation of a new Rail Validation System continued during 2025. This project will deliver a replacement Rail Validation System (RVS), encompassing timetable planning, crew and fleeting planning, allocation tools, on the day train management functionality and a delay attribution tool. This system will also further enhance the management of fatigue.

6.10. The performance of processes, procedures and risk control measures contained in the management system are monitored to ensure they are applied correctly and are effective. Where weaknesses are identified they are subject to the development of a corrective action plan, assigned an owner and monitored to completion via a divisional tracker. The findings from the monitoring programmes are discussed at various safety and management forums with safety always scheduled as first item on the agenda.

6.11. The ‘Safety Hub’, first introduced in 2022, has undergone continuous improvement throughout 2024 and 2025 and is now fully embedded within

NIR IM safety activities. It provides a secure repository of controlled, safety-critical documentation accessible to IM staff and authorised external contractors, enabling safe execution of departmental activities. Access is managed by the Network Document Controller and documents such as standards, procedures, guidance and instructions are readily available.

6.12. The Systems Review and Assurance Panel (SRAP) plays a critical role in supporting NIR IM in the effective application of the Common Safety Method (CSM) for monitoring. It provides a structured governance forum that scrutinises both the implementation of safety-related changes and the alignment of those changes with the Division's Change Management Framework, ensuring that safety performance is maintained and continuously improved.

6.13. IÉ RU highlight a wide range of monitoring activity, for example, both internal and external independent audits, discussion of the findings of monitoring programmes at formal safety meetings and reporting on and review of performance indicators and progress on safety actions. Where deficiencies are identified, these are rectified through corrective actions.

6.14. IÉ RU monitoring plans/programme consists of the following elements:

- Independent External Safety Audits;
- Compliance Verification;
- Internal Audits consisting of Functional, Topic and Management System Audits;
- Safety tours, Planned General Inspections, Safety Inspections and Management Reviews;
- The findings from the monitoring programmes (including non-conformances and associated action plans) are discussed at the safety meetings;
- Progress with actions from accident investigations and audits are also monitored at the safety meetings;
- Performance indicators and progress with actions to address findings and non-conformances are periodically reported to the RU Safety Review Group (SRG);

- Improvements to the company’s safety management system and the identification of the risks and controls associated with the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of the organisations managed assets and or infrastructure and which have been identified by analysis, evaluation and review, are introduced in a controlled manner in accordance with change control arrangements.

7. Supervision of Railway Undertakings and Infrastructure Managers

7.1. The day-to-day supervision of the health and safety performance of the railway industry is delivered under the 2006 Regulations where the NSA is the Department. The Department continues to work closely with CRR as well as NIR and IÉ on all EU issues and mutual railway safety matters as they impact on the shared service between Belfast and Dublin.

Monitoring and Supervision

7.3. The RSA hosts regular monitoring and supervision meetings with:

- NIR – infrastructure manager
- NIR – railway undertaking
- IÉ – railway undertaking

7.4. These meetings typically involve safety updates from the railway operators and monitoring of progress in implementing recommendations arising from audits and inspections.

Audit and Inspection – NIR

Internal Audits

7.4. The number of internal audits completed by the NIR RU and Ernst Young on behalf of the Board in 2025 was 14. The number of actions raised as a result of these audits was 66. Supplementary assurance activities included independent vehicle inspections, local site safety inspections and safety tours. The number of internal auditing activities conducted by or on behalf of the NIR IM during 2025 was 27. As a result of these audits there were 91 observations and 2 non-conformances highlighted. All findings were assessed as manageable within the organisation, with appropriate oversight maintained at departmental or divisional level.

RSA Audits and Inspections

7.5. To undertake the programme of audit and inspection, the RSA draws on the technical support and advice of railway engineers, fleet engineers and health and safety experts from ORR or HSENI. The RSA then works with the designated technical experts to develop a remit for each audit and inspection. During 2025, the following audits and inspections were conducted:Management of Contractors

- Train Crew Competence
- Low Rail Adhesion

A summary of the findings from these reports is contained in section 3.

7.6. Recommendations from completed inspections feed into an action log for the supervisory process to monitor NIR's progress in implementing the agreed response to the recommendations. This monitoring takes place during quarterly meetings.

Annex A: Main legislative framework for rail safety in NI

Transport Act (Northern Ireland) 1967

Railway Safety Act (Northern Ireland) 2002

The Railways (Safety Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006

The Cross-border Railway Services (Working Time) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008

The Train Driving Licences and Certificates Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010

The Railways (Interoperability) Regulations 2011

The Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014

The Private Crossings (Signs and Barriers) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014

The Railways Infrastructure (Access, Management and Licensing of Railway Undertakings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016