Railway safety supervision and investigation in the UK

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Framework before 2006

UK national regulations prior to 2006 required:

- **Railway Safety Cases**: infrastructure manager’s safety management system approved and monitored by the safety authority… comprising operator safety cases approved and monitored by the infrastructure manager

- **Approvals**: changes to the railway (infrastructure or trains) required a direct design approval by the safety authority

- **Competence**: requirements for safety critical workers

- **Accident investigation**: by the enforcing safety authority (Health and Safety Executive) under health and safety law
Framework from April 2006

UK regulations transposing the European Directives:

- **Safety Management Systems**: for infrastructure manager and operators both approved by the safety authority

- **Competence requirements**: for safety critical workers

- **Interoperability Authorisations**: by the combined safety and economic regulator (interoperability wider than safety), that authorises process rather than verifying the design

- **Accident investigation**: by the independent Railway Accident Investigation Body, separating safety recommendations from the enforcing safety authority
**Key changes in framework**

- Infrastructure manager does not have oversight of operator’s safety case - operator takes more responsibility.

- Safety authority authorises initial designs on the basis of third party conformity assessment.

- Safety and Economic regulator functions combined.

- Independent National Investigation Body can make recommendations that are:
  - based on information that is not influenced by the threat of enforcement, prosecution or blame.
  - not influenced by the performance of the enforcement body in carrying out its supervisory functions.
Benefits from current framework

- safety risk is managed by those that create it, fully understand it, and work with it every day
- operators are independent from the infrastructure manager - both must cooperate in a shared system
- safety recommendations following accidents can address actions for industry or Government bodies, free from political or organisational considerations
Conclusions

The current European framework is effective and sufficient

• “Safety Case” regimes have been used in UK since the Piper Alpha (oil rig) disaster and were applied to railways after privatisation to assure safety in a liberalised market

• After many years of safe working with SMS approvals, the UK has a high level of confidence in monitoring safety at SMS level, with routine inspection of the effective application of the SMS to everyday operations

• Key is to focus on initial assessment of capability and then monitoring of performance
Conclusions

The current European framework is effective and sufficient

- UK believes risk management should be based on a robust safety management framework and ensuring competence of industry personnel and accreditation of suppliers rather than the mandatory application of detailed processes, arbitrary safety methods or direct approval of designs/processes by Government.

- Independent investigation is key to learning lessons and establishing cause and this is recognised globally.

- Independent safety regulation provides proportionate supervision and appropriate challenge to all parties.