



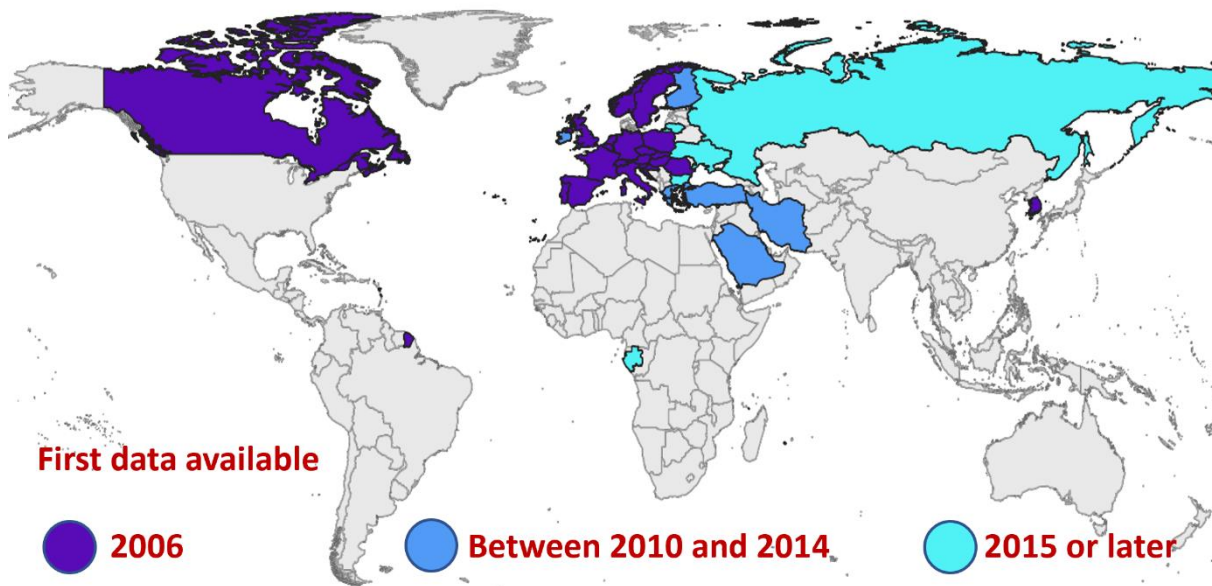
PRESS RELEASE 16/2021

Railway safety during the Covid-19 pandemic

(Paris, 16 November 2021) The International Union of Railways (UIC) has published its annual report on railway accidents.

Scope

Data on significant accidents has been collected in UIC's safety database since 2006 and currently covers 35 UIC members in Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Four new infrastructure managers began contributing to the UIC database in 2021: LTG (Lithuania), NRIC (Bulgaria), Euskotren and FGC (Spain).



Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on railway traffic

The pandemic severely disrupted railway traffic from March 2020 onwards. Following the introduction of governmental measures such as lockdowns, curfews, working from home and various traffic restrictions, freight and passenger traffic fell by more than 20% in comparison with January 2020. Levels comparable to those at the beginning of the year were not seen again until July, and traffic volumes were nevertheless lower than in 2019. Traffic dropped by 8% over the year as a whole.

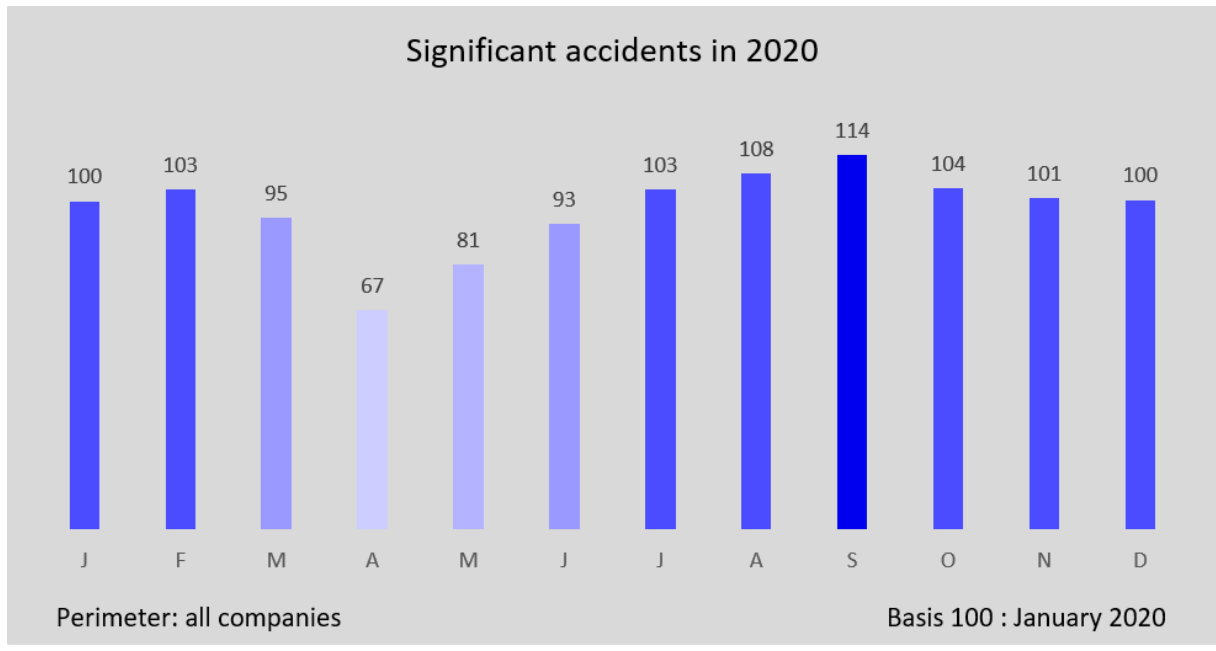


Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on accidents

The same pattern can be seen with regard to monthly accident numbers, with a sharp fall in April followed by a progressive rise until September and then a levelling-off in the final quarter of the year.

The number of accidents involving people hit by a train dropped by 34% at level crossings and by 12% elsewhere. Other types of accidents occurred with the same frequency as in 2019.

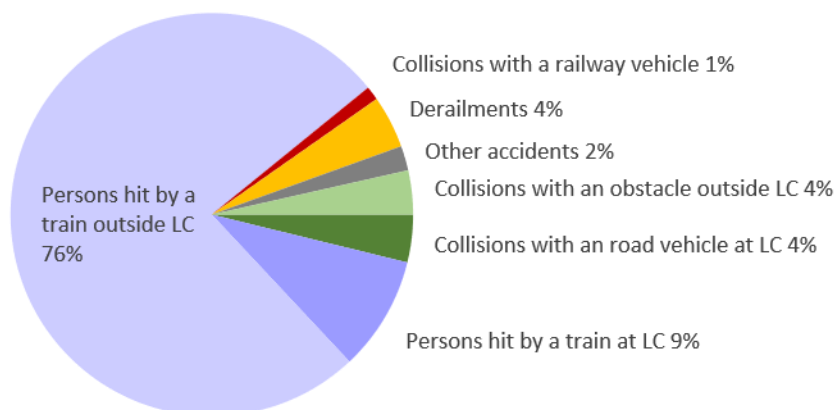
Looking at the year as a whole and compared with 2019, accidents fell by 11% overall (3,742 accidents in 2020 versus 4,187 accidents in 2019).



Causes of accidents in 2020

As has been the case throughout the history of the railways and in spite of prevention campaigns launched by railway companies, almost 90% of accidents were caused by third parties. The most common type of accident involved people being hit by a train away from a level crossing (76%), followed by people being hit by a train at a level crossing (9%) and collisions with motorised road vehicles at levels crossings (4%). These accounted for almost 90% of significant accidents. Uncivil behaviour occurs too frequently to be ignored, and it is up to society as a whole – with the authorities taking the lead – to ensure safety on railway lines.

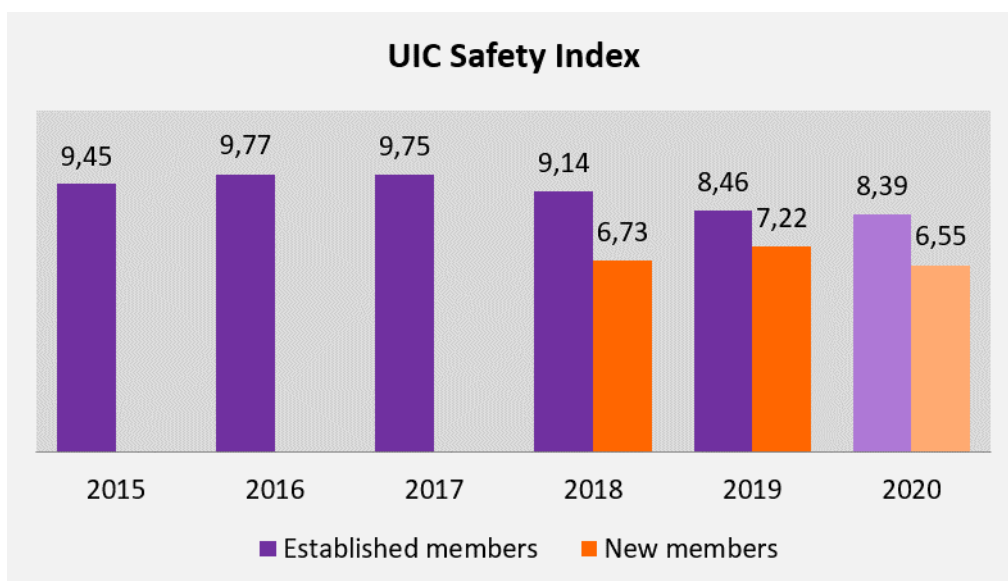
Split by type of accident in 2020



UIC Safety Index

UIC's Safety Index not only provides statistics on numbers of accidents, but also weights each accident on the basis of cause, type, and number and category of victims. This approach enables deeper insight into general safety levels, considered separately from high-impact events, which are fortunately rare.

The Safety Index has continued to decrease over the lifetime of the safety database and fell to 8.39 in 2020, indicating continuous improvement in railway transport safety levels. The index for the new members – 6.55 in 2020 – is added to this score. Despite the arrival of four new members, the total index fell from 15.68 in 2019 to 14.88 in 2020, a significant decrease of 5%, mainly due to the performance of the new members.



Members of UIC's safety database

Adif (Spain), CFL (Luxembourg), CFR-SA (Romania), CIE (Ireland), DB AG (Germany), HŽ (Croatia), Network Rail (UK), Infrabel (Belgium), IP (Portugal), BANE NOR SF (Norway), MÁV (Hungary), ÖBB (Austria), PKP (Poland), ProRail (Netherlands), RAI (Iran), SNCF Réseau (France), FS RFI (Italy), SBB CFF FFS (Switzerland), SŽ (Slovenia), SŽ (Czech Republic), TCDD (Turkey), Trafikverket (Sweden), ŽSR (Slovakia)

New members in 2019: RŽD (Russia), RAS-EL (Greece), KRRI (South Korea)

New members in 2020: FTIA (Finland), UŽ (Ukraine), Setrag (Gabon), SAR (Saudi Arabia)

New members in 2021: EUSKOTREN (Spain), FGC (Spain), LTG (Lithuania), NRIC (Bulgaria)

Access the document

UIC's 2021 report on safety can be downloaded from <http://safetydb.uic.org>

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