



Shunter Safety: The industry's hidden concern

There is no doubt that the rail industry is a potentially dangerous place to work. After all, there are not many industries that expect employees to deal with high voltage electricity, speeding vehicles, powerful machinery and thousands of members of the public on a daily basis.

Because of the obvious dangers, the industry as a whole is very aware of the need for the implementation of advanced technology systems in order to guarantee the safety of both the public and those employed to keep the UK's rails infrastructure on track. However, despite this, there are still areas of the industry that remain a dangerous place to work.

According to a study carried out by the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) shunter safety still remains a serious concern across the board in the UK rail industry.



Risk and effect

Shunters are very much 'on the ground' and working in the thick of the action, and the RSSB's report showed that the rates of shunter fatalities and RIDDOR-reportable injuries suggest a significantly higher level of risk than other workforce groups.

According to the study, the average FOC shunter loses 0.7 working days a year as a result of injuries sustained whilst at work, whilst on average a TOC shunter reported to lose around 0.2 days.

Occupational health risks that such a job entails are great. Operating heavy manual points, sometimes when standing on an uneven surface or working in poor conditions, could lead to lasting damage to the back, neck or shoulders, which not only causes the employee suffering and lost working days, but could also lead to a more serious accident.

