

Dilip

Thanks for inviting comments on this. The response from Passenger Focus and London TravelWatch to the rail safety element of the Red Tape Challenge, which I drafted, said (in part) :

*There are relatively few prescriptive measures dealing with the specifics of rail safety systems, and those which exist (e.g. in relation to lineside protection, “lock, block and brake”, carriage door locking, driver intoxication, signal warning systems, or fire precautions at sub-surface stations) were the product of political imperatives at the time they were enacted. Arguably, these matters could be subsumed within the generic system of rail safety regulation, but (as the previous government’s efforts to rescind the station fire safety regulations demonstrated) such a move would be likely to be construed as aiming to relax safety standards and could therefore be contentious. Since these requirements are now universally accepted anyway, the political risk to which proposals for their repeal would give rise is unlikely to be worth taking.*

That remains my view, though I no longer speak for those organisations. However, if ORR no longer thinks it is necessary to preserve a few specific requirements (some deriving from 19th century statutes) because it believes that their purposes are now adequately secured by more recent legislation of a more generic character, and that no material change in terms of safety policies and practices will result, I would not maintain an objection.

The proposal to allow a more pragmatic and flexible division of functions between HSE and ORR makes sense, if the current wording has proved problematic.

Regards,

John Cartledge