

Rail safety in 2021

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In 2021 the accident rate on the railway network was 1.97. This parameter is lower than before the pandemic, but higher than in pandemic 2020. The Office of Rail Transport has published the “Rail Safety Report 2021”.

In 2021 511 accidents occurred on railway network – it is the second lowest result in the safety statistics to date. The lowest result was recorded in pandemic 2020. The total number of accidents, including those on railway sidings, was 662, which is an increase by 28.3% compared to 2020 and by 3.1% compared to 2019. This change was largely influenced by accidents on railway sidings, which there were 151, the highest number since the Office of Rail Transport started collecting safety data.

The most numerous accident types on the railway network in 2021 were accidents at level crossings. There were 216 of these, 47 more than in 2020 and 17 more than in 2019. The second most common type of accident was accidents involving persons - 144 in 2021, 8 more than in 2020 but 17 fewer than in 2019. Derailments came third, with 106. The number of these accidents rose rapidly among other types, with 42 accidents in 2020, but this increase was only by one accident compared to 2019.

Almost three quarters of accidents on the railway network originate outside the railway system. In 2021 there were 370 accidents, accounting for 72.4% of all accidents. These were mainly accidents at level crossings (216), involving people on the tracks in prohibited places (137), or involving road vehicles outside level crossings at stations and routes (8). A total of 149 people were killed and 44 injured in these accidents.

The number of accidents on railway sidings increased last year. Railway vehicle derailments and collisions were the most common, accounting for a total of 87.4% of all accidents. Accidents at railway sidings at rail-road crossings and pedestrian crossings and accidents involving persons and moving railway vehicles accounted for only 12.6%. This structure of accidents at these locations reflects their peculiarities, where mainly shunting and other manoeuvres are done and the condition of the infrastructure is often worse than that on the main railway network. In contrast, the relatively low train speeds reduce the risk of incidents at

crossings or involving people.

2021 was the first year in which the provisions of 4th Railway Package were fully in force in Poland.

When we implement new regulations, it helps us to understand the reasons behind their introduction. That's why our Railway Safety Report plays an important role. We prepare this document every year and we comprehensively describe the state of railway safety through the prism of accident and incident statistics. We can identify problems of the railway companies and propose solutions, including legislative changes. It is also a form of presenting information on the activities of our Office – comments Ignacy Góra, President of the Office of Rail Transport, wrote in the introduction to the report.

In 2021 for the first time the regulations for reporting incidents on narrow-gauge railways were in force for a full 12 months. In 2021 8 accidents involving narrow-gauge railways were reported. 5 out of 8 accidents occurred at level crossings, 2 accidents were related to the technical condition of the wagons in operation, while 1 accident occurred due to a natural disaster.

Our new report provides a comprehensive information of the safety of the railway system in Poland in 2021. We collected data on serious accidents, accidents and incidents collected to prepare it. The analysis of these data helped us to identify areas requiring further action to maintain and continuously improve the safety of railway transport in Poland.

The report in Polish in PDF format can be downloaded from [our website](#).