



Frequently asked transport questions

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Roads and vehicles

Roads and vehicles section

Does the UK have the safest roads in Europe?

Every death on the road is a tragedy, however we certainly have one of the best records, together with Sweden, Norway and the Netherlands. For 2005 the fatality rate per billion motor vehicle kilometres of traffic was 6.4 in the UK compared with a European Union average of 10.5. There is still a long way to go but we are committed to reducing fatal accidents still further.

Our overall child road safety record (including children as pedestrians, accidents in cars, on bikes) is generally very good. In 2005 our deaths per 100,000 population was 1.2 compared to the European average of 2.1. However when we look at just the figures for child pedestrian fatalities, (ie crossing the roads) then we do less well compared to Europe. Therefore the Department's THINK! campaign, promoting child road safety to both children and parents alike, continues to be one of the government's most high profile messages.

Further reference: <http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk/>

What are the rules on using a mobile phone while driving?

Using any type of phone, whether hand-held or hands-free, is dangerous because the conversation distracts from the concentration needed to drive safely. It has been a specific offence since 1 December 2003 to drive and use a hand-held phone. Since 27 February 2007 the offence became subject to endorsement of three penalty points and a £60 fine. If a case goes to court, you could risk a maximum fine of £1,000, (or £2,500 for the driver of a bus, coach or heavy goods vehicle). Should there be a crash the more serious offences of careless or dangerous driving could apply.

You risk prosecution if you hold a mobile phone at any time while driving, even when you are stopped at traffic lights or in a queue of traffic. This includes making or receiving calls, text messaging or accessing the Internet. If you use your phone to take pictures while driving you could also be prosecuted for failing to have proper control of your vehicle.

Using a hands-free mobile phone also leaves you open to prosecution for failing to have proper control of your vehicle, or for careless or dangerous driving, and the penalties are the same as for driving while using a hand-held phone.

For further information please go to <http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk/advice/mobilephones.htm>

What are the rules on child car seats?

Since 18 September 2006, in vehicles where seat belts are fitted children up to 135 cms (approx 4ft 5ins) in height must use the appropriate child restraint (i.e. baby seat, child car seat, booster seat or booster cushion) suitable for their size and weight. Children who are 135 cms or taller, or aged 12 years, whichever is reached first, may use the adult seat belt.

For further information please go to <http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk/campaigns/childcarseats/childcarseats.htm>

Will leaded or four star petrol ever be phased out completely?

Leaded petrol has been banned from general sale since 2000, although a very small quantity remains available for specialist use in classic cars. As the quantities involved are so small we have no plans to restrict further the sale of leaded petrol.

Further reference: [Advice on alternatives to leaded petrol](#)

Why does an occasional inch of snow seem to shut down Britain's roads?

The Highways Agency, an executive agency of DfT, provides winter maintenance on the motorway and trunk road network. The Agency has over 700 gritters and snow blowers working from 150 depots distributing up to 500,000 tonnes of salt each winter. And if stationary vehicles on the roads mean the gritters and snow blowers can't get out, the Agency liaises with local police forces to grit the roads.

Accurate weather forecasts are vital if the Highways Agency is to make the right winter maintenance decisions. The Agency has an advanced system of 800 road weather stations, providing forecasters and decision-makers with accurate weather information.

The Highways Agency has worked hard over the summer 2003 to learn lessons from the events of January 2003. For more information about how the Highways Agency has improved its preparations, and guidance about driving safely and keeping your vehicle maintained during the winter see the official Highways Agency winter driving guidance from their website.

What is the alcohol limit for driving?

The legal limit, known as blood alcohol content (BAC), is 80 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood. You cannot reliably convert this into a number of drinks. The best advice, as promoted in our THINK! road safety campaign, is not to drink and drive.

Further reference: [Drink Driving Factsheet](#)

What do I stand to lose if I drive while over the limit?

You will lose your licence for at least one year and you may be fined up to Â£5,000 pounds. Your insurer may withdraw cover, or at the very least increase your premium, and an endorsed record of your offence will remain on your licence for 11 years. Some people who rely on driving for work will lose their jobs and it is likely to be difficult explaining your criminal record at job interviews that you attend. If you kill someone while driving over the limit, you could get up to 14 years in prison for causing death by careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs.

Further reference: [THINK! Drink Driving](#)

How does the Government decide whether a major road should be built?

Decisions on major road schemes follow an extensive process of study and consultation. The first stage is generally identifying a particular problem on the road network such as high levels of congestion, safety problems or communities suffering separation. If the problem is serious enough, further detailed study work by the relevant highway authority will follow (The Highways Agency is the highway authority for motorways and trunk roads, and local councils for local roads).

A range of options will be considered for each case, including alternatives to road building, and assess them against key transport objectives such as likely costs, safety, environmental impact and improvements to accessibility.

Where these assessments suggest a road solution the highway authority submits road schemes costing more than Â£5 million to Ministers who will consider whether funding is available, and whether the proposals fit in with wider priorities. A road scheme may not be supported at this stage if for example, it may damage the environment or it is not a higher priority than other proposals put forward.

Should a scheme receive Ministerial endorsement, it then goes through a series of stages, including detailed design work, consultation with local residents, publication of draft orders to fix the route and proposals for land acquisition.

The next stagemay be a public inquiry at which arguments for and against a particular scheme are aired. Following the inquiry, the recommendations are passed to Ministers who then jointly decide whether the scheme should proceed.

What is the Government doing to help cyclists?

Cycling is a key part of the Government's plans to encourage more sustainable transport options for the future. It offers an accessible, convenient and environmentally-friendly means of making local journeys, particularly in urban and suburban areas. And of course, is a healthy, economic and independent method of travel.

The Government's aim is to encourage more people to cycle within an integrated transport system, which will give people wide options over their local transport options and in particular, their local journeys to work and to school. We intend to achieve this with the help of our advisory body 'Cycling England' through targeted investment, which will help change attitudes to cycling so that it is viewed by all as a

means of everyday transport.

The Government created 'Cycling England' in March 2005 and they have been tasked with working with local authorities and others to promote cycling. The members of Cycling England consist of experts in transport policy, engineering, public health, the cycle industry, local government, cycle sport, cycle training and education. They will help to further develop best practice on design of facilities, promotion of cycling and also ensure that Local Authorities get the most from their Local Transport Plans.

Cycling England was awarded an annual Â£5m budget, which the Secretary of State for Transport doubled to Â£10m per annum in June 2006. Cycling England funds a range of projects such as the 'Links to Schools' project, which ties in schools to the wider 10,000 miles of the National Cycle Network and reduces need for school children to cycle on busy roads, 'Bikeability', the new more rigorous cycling proficiency test which was launched in March 2007 and the Cycling Demonstration Towns project which seeks to test the hypothesis that by investing at similar levels as seen in some other European cities they can deliver similarly high proportions of cycle journeys.

You can view further details on all of Cycling England's projects and their progress on their website: www.cyclingengland.co.uk

To further encourage cycling, it is important that quality cycling infrastructure is put in place to help ensure the safety of cyclists. Therefore the Government has also encouraged all local highway authorities in England to develop a cycling strategy as part of their local transport plans (LTPs). Most have now done so. The creation of local cycling strategies has led to improved facilities for cycling in many areas.

The Government greatly values sustainable travel and although we acknowledge that there is still much work to do, we believe that through the Department for Transport and our advisory body, Cycling England, considerable progress is being made and that provision for cyclists will significantly improve in the coming years.

Further reference: [Cycling England](#)

Why are cameras used as a means of making money?

The purpose of safety cameras is not to raise money, they are about changing driver behaviour - to encourage drivers to stay within the speed limit.

Everyday about 9 people will die and a further 78 will be seriously injured on our roads, and excessive or inappropriate speed will be a factor in a significant number of these accidents.

Safety cameras have played a vital role in helping us to reduce road casualties. Where, they have been introduced, cameras have on average reduced the number of people killed or seriously injured by 42%.

It is a myth that cameras are used as a means of making money. The fine income from safety cameras is not retained by local partnerships. They therefore have no incentive to place cameras other than to improve road safety. All fine income goes to the Treasury's consolidated fund in the same way as other fines.

The best and most effective camera would be one that doesn't issue a single ticket.

Further reference: [Safety cameras frequently asked questions](#)

[FAQs about child car seats \(from the THINK! Road Safety website\)](#)

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Aviation

Aviation section

What do I do if my baggage is lost by the airline?

Lost, damaged or delayed baggage is covered under the 1999 Montreal Convention which came into force for the UK in June 2004, and deals with the principles of carrier liability. Under the Convention, unless the carrier can establish any of the defences set out in the Montreal Convention (and the burden of proof is on them to establish such a defence), they are prima facie liable for luggage that has been delayed, damaged or lost. The liability for delay, loss or damage to baggage is limited to 1,000 Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) (approximately Â£820).

The Convention allows for passengers carrying valuable items to make a special declaration of interest to the airline and, for a fee, their baggage will be covered for the full value of the declared amount. The carrier will be liable to pay a sum not exceeding the declared sum, unless it proves that the sum is greater than the passenger's actual baggage value. Passengers must make their request to the check-in agent before baggage is checked-in and the special declaration fee must be collected at the start of the journey.

Passengers should report any mishandled baggage problems to the service desk in the baggage collection hall before they leave the airport. The Air Transport Users Council (AUC) advise that when a baggage problem at the airport is reported, the airline or agent should make out a Property Irregularity Report (PIR) and give the passenger a copy. The airline will want to see the PIR when making a claim. But it is not a legal requirement to have a PIR and an airline should not simply dismiss your claim without one.

How do I know if my holiday is protected?

If your holiday is covered by the Air Transport Organisers' Licensing (ATOL) scheme you will get your money back if the holiday operator or airline becomes insolvent before you go on holiday, or you get repatriated if it fails when you are already on holiday.

Package holidays involving a flight must be covered by ATOL, as are some flights where a ticket is not issued to you immediately. Flights booked directly with airlines, for example through their websites, are generally not required to be covered by ATOL, so you may want to consider buying insurance to protect you in case the airline becomes insolvent before you complete your holiday.

More details are available from the Civil Aviation Authority's website www.caa.co.uk, who administer ATOL scheme. The Air Transport Users Council website also provides advice www.caa.co.uk/auc. The AUC is the UK's consumer watchdog that acts on behalf of air transport users, and can often assist in bringing matters to an amicable conclusion. Their contact details are CAA House, 45-49 Kingsway, London WC2B 6TE.

How can I complain about my airline?

If you have a complaint about an airline's service, then you should contact the airline's or air tour operator's customer service department in the first instance. European rules exist setting out the compensation you are entitled to receive in certain circumstances, for example, if you are denied boarding to a flight or the flight is delayed more than a certain amount of time. Full details can be found at <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l24173.htm>.

If you are unhappy with the way an airline has handled your complaint, then you may contact the Air Transport Users Council, which exists to protect the interests of air passengers. Full details can be found at <http://www.caa.co.uk/default.aspx?catid=306&pagetype=90&pageid=2416>.

What if I have concerns about my fitness to fly?

If you have concerns about your fitness to fly you should consult your Doctor or a Medical Practitioner before you are due to travel. The Civil Aviation Authority has produced guidelines for medical professionals on assessing a passenger's fitness to fly. This can be viewed via the CAA website at <http://www.caa.co.uk/fitnessofly>.

What are the current airport security measures regarding luggage on flights?

Following the attacks in America on 11 September 2001, an immediate review of UK aviation security was carried out with the industry. We then brought in a package of extra security measures, both to prevent an attacker getting on board an aircraft and to offer the best protection in-flight.

In November 2006 new security measures were introduced at all airports across the EU, in particular the quantity of liquids and the size of luggage which passengers are allowed to take on board aircraft. Full details are listed on the airport security section of the DfT website: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/airportsecurity>.

Further reference: [Current airline security arrangements](#), [Transport Security](#).

How early do I need to check-in?

Check-in times vary depending on the airline and length of flight, but it is advisable to leave plenty of time to get to the airport, and to complete check-in formalities. In general, latest recommended check-in times for domestic and short-haul flights are around 60 minutes before departure and for long-haul flights around two hours before departure, but you should check with your airline for detailed information.

What are the requirements for passports and visas?

You are responsible for ensuring your passport is valid and kept in good condition. Some countries do not accept passports with less than six months validity and damaged or defaced passports are often not acceptable for travel.

For information about how to obtain or renew a UK passport, please see the Identity and Passport Service website <http://www.passport.gov.uk/>.

For travel to certain countries a visa or electronic travel authority (an electronic form of visa) is required. You should leave plenty of time to obtain a visa before you leave the UK.

For more information on visa requirements and other entry requirements see the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's travel advice for the country you wish to visit <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029390572>.

What health precautions should I take?

It is recommended that you take particular health precautions before and during your visit to certain countries. NHS Direct gives information about health precautions and recommended inoculations. See <http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/articles/article.aspx?articleId=1072>

For information about bird flu in particular and risks to human health, see http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Aboutus/MinistersandDepartmentLeaders/ChiefMedicalOfficer/Features/DH_4102997.

Why do airlines ask for information about me before I travel?

An increasing number of countries require airlines to provide information about their passengers in advance of their arrival. Such information is used to screen passenger identities against those of known terrorists and others involved in serious crime. Australia, Canada, Spain, the US and UK are amongst the countries that require passenger information. Your airline will advise you if this information needs to be collected.

If you are travelling to a country where such information is required, you are strongly advised to supply it before you arrive at the airport. Many airlines allow you to do this online. This will save you time at check-in. Please note that it is a condition of carriage that you supply this information, and that your airline is unable to permit you to travel unless you do so. The European Union has entered into agreements with the other countries concerned to ensure that the data you provide is handled appropriately.

What security restrictions are in place?

Security at airports is aimed at preventing weapons, explosives or other similar prohibited items being taken on board aircraft. Since the alleged plot in 2006, tighter security measures for liquids have been in force at UK, European and international airports. If you need to, you can take small quantities of liquids through security. But only if they are carried in a single, clear, re-sealable plastic bag and each item is placed in a separate container no greater than 100ml. A freezer bag â approximately 20cm x 20cm or smaller - is about the right size. Detailed instructions, including on essential liquid medicines, can be found here: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/airtravel/airportsecurity/>

Currently, passengers are also limited to one piece of hand baggage per person (a handbag counts as one). This restriction makes the task of identifying potentially dangerous liquids and other possible threat items easier, and helps to reduce potential delays at the screening point. With effect from 7 January 2008, the one item restriction will no longer apply at certain airports. [Click here for more details](#)

Can I carry duty-free drinks in the aircraft cabin?

You may take on board liquid items of any size that are purchased after the security search point in the departure lounge (sometimes referred to as 'Airside'), as these items would have undergone a separate screening process.

Most duty free or similar purchases will be given to you in a special sealed bag. Do not open this bag until you have reached your final destination. You should also retain your proof of purchase throughout your journey. You will be required to show it at all transfer points. Please note, restrictions apply to duty free purchases made on return journeys where passengers change flights at an EU airport. If in doubt, please check at the airport before you make your purchase.

What are the entry requirements for the UK?

All travellers's passports are currently checked and scanned on entering the UK and you may encounter delays at certain peak periods.

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs provide details of the limitations on the import of duty free and other goods. See

http://customs.hmrc.gov.uk/channelsPortalWebApp/channelsPortalWebApp.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=pageTravel_InfoGuides&columns=1&id=CUSTOMSALLOWANCES

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) provides advice on the import of food items (including meat, vegetables, dairy products and honey). Many items cannot be brought into the UK from non-EU countries and you should check carefully if you wish to bring food items home. See <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/illegal/default.htm>

Defra also provides advice on the import of items derived from plants and animals subject to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). For example, antique ivory may be imported but not modern ivory. See <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/gwd/cites/index.htm>

How can I check that the airline is safe?

Aviation is a safe means of travel. UK airlines are regulated by the Civil Aviation Authority, who also inspect foreign-registered aircraft travelling to the UK to check if they meet international standards of safety. However, when travelling in certain regions of the world, you should be aware that safety standards vary. The EU maintains a 'blacklist' of carriers that are banned from flying to Europe because of safety concerns. The up-to-date list can be found here http://ec.europa.eu/transport/air-ban/list_en.htm. The FCO's travel advice also contains some information on local airline safety by country <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029390590>. We recommend you consult this advice and take it into account when planning your journey.

What assistance is available for people with reduced mobility?

Air carriers operating to or from the EU are required to make arrangements for passengers with reduced mobility if requested. If you require special assistance, please inform your air carrier well in advance of your intended travel date to discuss your requirements.

What form of identification do I require to travel?

Passengers should always check with the booking agency (or the airline website) at the time of purchasing a ticket if they are in any doubt about the form of identification, if any, that may be required to be produced. Immigration Control in the UK is managed by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) at the Home Office. See: <http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

How environmentally damaging is it to fly?

Globally, carbon dioxide from aviation is responsible for around 1.6% of total greenhouse gas emissions. In 2005, the UK aviation sector accounted for around 6.3% of UK total CO₂ emissions.

Estimated emissions of carbon dioxide by IPCC source category, 2005.

United Kingdom million tonnes, as carbon dioxide.

By Source category	2005	% Transport	% of Total
Passenger cars	69.9	41.2%	11.7%
Aviation (National and International)	37.5	22.1%	6.3%
Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGVs)	28.6	16.8%	4.8%
Light duty vehicles	16.8	9.9%	2.8%
Navigation (national and international)	10.0	5.9%	1.7%
Buses	3.6	2.1%	0.6%
Railways	2.0	1.2%	0.3%
Other*	1.0	0.6%	0.2%
Mopeds & motorcycles	0.4	0.3%	0.1%
	169.9	100.0%	28.5%
Total (all sources) + international	595.1		100%

* Includes: LPG emissions, road vehicle engine emissions and other mobile sources and machinery emissions.

How much 'green tax' do I pay to travel by air?

Aviation is currently exempt from fuel tax due to policies stemming from the International Civil Aviation Organisation and bilateral air services treaties that cannot be unilaterally amended. The only tax currently levied on air passengers is the Air Passenger Duty (APD), which is currently:

- Â£10 for intra-EU economy class;
- Â£20 for intra-EU non-economy class;
- Â£40 for long-haul economy class; and
- Â£80 for long-haul non-economy class.

HM Treasury estimate is that APD will save 0.3 million tonnes of carbon. Taking into account other effects ("radiative forcing"), that could be equivalent to Â¾ million tonnes of carbon. This is broadly equivalent to 750 transatlantic flights.

The Government announced in the Pre-Budget Report (PBR) 2007 that it will replace APD with a per plane tax on 1st November 2009. This new aviation tax will send an improved signal of environmental costs and ensure that the sector pays its fair share in contributing towards the Government's spending priorities including public transport and the environment.

A consultation will begin shortly to consider ways of making aviation duty better correlated to distance travelled and to encourage more planes to fly at full capacity. The Government will work closely with industry to consult on the detail of this duty, including its impact on freight and on transit and transfer passengers.

How can I offset my emissions?

The number of companies selling offsets is growing. Sometimes these offsets are sold with goods and services, such as flights. As part of its support for offsetting, the Government is developing a standard and voluntary Code of best practice for companies who sell carbon offsets. The proposed standard and associated code of practice, which is strongly supported by the offsetting industry and business, environment and other sectors, aims to provide consistency in the offsetting industry and clarity for those choosing to offset their carbon emissions. The Code will ensure that a consistent approach is used to calculate emissions to be offset. It will also require that consumers are provided with clear information of the role of offsetting in tackling climate change.

Offsets accredited under the Code will be awarded a quality mark so consumers can recognise them easily. The Government hopes to finalise the Code in spring 2008. Businesses selling offsets will then be able to choose to seek accreditation for their offsets.

Further information can be found at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/uk/carbonoffset/codeofpractice.htm>

How can I find details about aviation expansion?

The Government set out its aviation policy in its 2003 Future of Air Transport White Paper (ATWP) and reaffirmed it in the 2006 Progress Report. The White Paper promoted the making of best use of existing airport capacity, and ensuring that, where new capacity is required, its provision is in line with our environmental obligations. The White Paper supported the building of two new runways in the South East (at Stansted and, subject to strict environmental conditions on noise and air quality being met, at Heathrow). More information on the Government's aviation policies are set out in the ATWP and ATWP Progress report.

Can I take my pets on board when I fly?

Essentially, pets may indeed travel on flights, but please note this depends on a number of factors:

- Should a dog or cat be entering the UK by use of the Pet Travel Scheme (PETS), it must be carried by the airline as manifest cargo. This means that the pet will travel in the hold of the plane, which is usually darkened and heated to help calm the animal.
- If a smaller pet (such as a guinea pig or rabbit) enters the UK by use of an airline, it may travel in the cabin with the pet owner, but is subject to the stipulations of the carrier.

- If a pet is leaving the UK, to be exported to another country, it may travel in the cabin with its owner provided this is acceptable with both the carrier and the authorities of the destination country.

For full details of UK PETS requirements, please click on the following link:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/quarantine/pets/procedures/owners.htm>

FAQs about adding capacity at Heathrow airport

FAQs about advance passenger information: information for air travellers between the UK and Spain

FAQs about the listing of aviation security providers

FAQs about the project for the sustainable development of Heathrow

Rail

Rail section

Who do I go to with a complaint about my train service?

If you have a complaint about the railway or the service you have received from a train company then you should complain to the service provider (Network Rail or the train operator). Most complaints can be resolved in the first instance by dealing directly with the company responsible.

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your complaint or you do not feel it was handled appropriately, then Passenger Focus may be able to help. Passenger Focus is the independent national rail consumer watchdog. It can make representations to mediate with the train company on your behalf. (Passenger helpline: 08453 022 022, website: <http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk>)

How will overcrowding on trains be reduced?

The Government plans to invest over Â£10 billion in enhancing capacity between 2009 and 2014. This will mean over 1300 new additional carriages on the network and longer platforms to cater for the biggest single increase in capacity for over a generation.

What is being done to make the fares' structure less complicated?

Train operators will radically streamline the fares' structure by creating four simple categories across the whole network. 'Anytime', 'Off peak' and 'Super Off peak' will be available on the day or in advance; and 'Advance' which will be available in advance. Simplifying the fares will make it easier for passengers to identify and buy the ticket they need by bringing transparency to the fares' structure.

Why have my fares gone up?

About 80% of passengers travel on regulated or discounted tickets, many of which are cheaper in cash terms than they were under British Rail. These regulated fares include commuter fares around London and other major cities, weekly seasons and long-distance Saver Returns nationwide. The Government places a limit on annual average increases in these fares, currently inflation+1%.

All other fares are set by train operators who are free to set these fares on a commercial basis. It is in the franchise operator's interest to provide an attractive range of fares that succeed in continuing the trend of more passengers using the railway.

Travelling at peak times is likely to cost the most but by booking in advance or travelling outside of peak hours, passengers can get significant savings on fares. <http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/>

Are U.K. fares more expensive than those in Europe?

European standard fares, used by the majority of passengers, are sometimes misleadingly contrasted with the highest UK open fares which are used by only 10-15% of passengers on a typical inter-city route. The remaining 85% of passengers pay the same or less than in comparable parts of Europe.

UK train operators have developed a commercial fares' structure with higher fares for peak travellers and lower fares for off-peak travel. Most European countries have a less differentiated fares' structure, but are now beginning to follow the UK's lead.

Why are passengers being asked to pay more than taxpayers for the railway?

There are only two principal sources of funding for the railways: passengers and taxpayers. The Delivering a sustainable railway [White Paper published on 24 July 2007](#) takes advantage of the increase in passenger numbers to use that extra revenue to help fund further investment in the railway rather than maintain the recently high level of taxpayer subsidy. Network Rail has been driving down its costs and this trend is expected to continue thereby allowing additional resources to be invested in developing the network.

Are my trains any more punctual than in the past?

Train punctuality is measured by the industry's "Public Performance Measure" (PPM)". It means that a train is regarded as arriving on time if it arrives within five minutes (i.e. 4 minutes 59 seconds or less) of the planned destination arrival time, or within 10 minutes (i.e. 9 minutes 59 seconds or less) if it is a long distance train. (All cancelled and partially cancelled trains are considered late for the purposes of calculation, in order to reflect the passenger experience.)

By this measure trains are now (July 2007) averaging 88% on time compared with 74.2% in November 2001, reflecting the cumulative effect of the Hatfield accident. By 2013-14, Government expects train reliability to improve further to a PPM of 92.6%.

PPM punctuality results are published by the Office of Rail Regulation in its quarterly document National Rail Trends. www.rail-reg.gov.uk

Why is a new company running my train services?

Contracts to run passenger services in a given area (franchises) are awarded by the Government for periods of between seven to ten years. This ensures that there are regular competitions between companies so that the taxpayer gets best value for money for the services it pays for. Details of recent franchise awards can be found here <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/rail/passenger/franchises/>

Can I take my bicycle on the train?

Policies on carrying bicycles on trains are set by individual operators.

In encouraging people to use bikes as part of their journey, the Government believes that improving cycle facilities at stations is the key to integrating cycle and rail journeys. It is supporting a new Cycle-Rail Task Force comprising ATOC (the Association of Train Operators), Cycling England, Network Rail and Passenger Focus to promote best practice and to help the Government to get right the detail of the franchising regime.

Future franchises will clarify the position of carriage of cycles on trains, specifying that folding bicycles should be allowed on trains at all times, free of charge, but that non-folding cycles can be excluded at the discretion of train operators at peak periods.

Why do engineering works take place at the weekend?

Some track and signalling renewal jobs, such as the modernisation of the West Coast mainline, require more time than can be squeezed into overnight engineering maintenance works. It therefore makes good sense to close the line for a limited period to maximise the amount of work done on the track, usually when fewer people are travelling which is at the weekend. The short term inconvenience is made up for with longer term enhanced reliability.

However Network Rail is looking at ways of maximising the amount of work that can be done over shorter periods of time so that it can deliver a seven day a week railway.

FAQs about community rail development and strategy

FAQs about the Crossrail hybrid bill

FAQs about interoperability

FAQs about the Secure Station Scheme

FAQs about the security of dangerous goods transported by rail

Shipping and ports

FAQs about the minimum training commitment as part of the Tonnage Tax regime

Multi-mode

FAQs about counter-terrorist checks (CTC) clearance to undertake transport security activities

FAQs about Criminal Record Checks

FAQs about the Disability Discrimination Act 2005

FAQs about the transport security and contingency team

FAQs about Transport Users Benefit Appraisal (TUBA)

Accessibility

Accessibility section

FAQs about access for disabled people

FAQs about the Blue Badge Scheme

FAQs about buses and coaches