



Rail Accident Investigation Branch

## The RAIB

The Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) is the independent railway accident investigation organisation for the UK.

The RAIB is concerned with the investigation of accidents and incidents on:

- the national railway networks in Great Britain and Northern Ireland;
- the Channel Tunnel (in co-operation with its equivalent operation in France);
- the London and Glasgow Underground systems and other metro systems;
- tramways;
- heritage railways (including narrow-gauge systems over 350mm gauge); and
- cable-hauled systems of 1km or longer.

The purpose of an RAIB investigation is to improve the safety of railways, and to prevent further accidents from occurring.

The RAIB achieves this by identifying the causes of accidents along with any other factors that contributed to the event or made the outcome worse, such as technical or operational factors or those arising from management systems.

The RAIB's investigations are entirely independent and are focused solely on safety improvement. The RAIB does not apportion blame or liability nor enforce law or carry out prosecutions.

## What are the RAIB's powers?

The powers of the RAIB and its Inspectors - and the framework for reporting and investigating accidents - are set out in the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 and the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005.

The RAIB Inspectors have the power to:

- enter railway property, land or vehicles;
- seize anything relating to the accident and make records;
- require access to and disclosure of records and information; and
- require people to answer questions and provide information about anything relevant to the investigation.

## How do I contact the RAIB?

Should you have any questions about the RAIB or its investigations, please contact the RAIB using the information below.

# An introduction to Accredited Agents

## Leaflet 03



Guidance on the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005 can be found at [www.raib.gov.uk](http://www.raib.gov.uk)

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Rail Accident Investigation Branch

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### What is an Accredited Agent?

For many investigations, the RAIB will immediately dispatch inspectors to the site of an incident or accident. However, owing to the remote location of some of these sites, there may be occasions when it will take some time for the RAIB Inspector to travel from the RAIB's operational centres.

The RAIB has therefore trained and appointed people from industry to secure and record evidence until the RAIB Inspector arrives on site. These people are referred to as Accredited Agents.

The authority of Accredited Agents is limited to securing and recording evidence at the site; they are not investigators. However, as there are some 400 Accredited Agents located across the UK, they are able to attend the site very quickly.

**More detailed information about how the RAIB conducts investigations can be found in Leaflet 01 - An introduction to the RAIB.**  
Download at [www.raib.gov.uk](http://www.raib.gov.uk)

### Why does the RAIB need Accredited Agents?

Site evidence is critical for an efficient and effective investigation. Early presence immediately following an accident or incident is therefore vital to record perishable evidence or evidence that might otherwise be lost.

Evidence could also be accidentally affected by the Emergency Services' rescue and recovery activities, as well as by others involved in a large-scale situation.

### How are Accredited Agents selected?

Accredited Agents are initially selected according to their location and skills. Before Accredited Agents are deployed to an accident site they have carried out specific training, which is carried out by RAIB Inspectors. Accredited Agents also undergo periodic re-confirmation of competency assessments.

Successful Accredited Agents are issued with an Accredited Agent Identity Card.

### How are Accredited Agents called up?

When an accident happens, the local Accredited Agent is mobilised by their employer who has responsibility for the operation of that part of the railway.

On arriving at the accident site the Accredited Agent will contact the RAIB Duty Co-ordinator. The Duty Co-ordinator will formally approve the Accredited Agent's attendance on site and inform the Accredited Agent of the RAIB Inspector's estimated time of arrival.

The Duty Co-ordinator will also inform the Police, or others protecting the perimeter of the site, that the Accredited Agent should be allowed immediate access. This mobilisation process ensures that:

- an Accredited Agent arrives quickly at the accident site
- the other parties involved are aware that the RAIB has representation on site by way of Accredited Agents.

Although the Accredited Agent is working on behalf of the RAIB they are still the Duty Holder's employee and, as such, they must comply with their employer's safety procedures.

### What will an Accredited Agent do on site?

The role of an Accredited Agent comprises the following essential tasks:

- make an initial assessment of the extent of the accident, including whether any other sites or
- locations may contain perishable evidence, and then communicate this information to the RAIB. identify, record and preserve perishable and
- vulnerable evidence, ensuring such items are recorded properly for the RAIB. when the RAIB's Lead Inspector arrives on site, provide a brief on any evidence issues and hand over any written or photographic records.

When the Accredited Agent has completed the briefing and hand-over to the RAIB's Lead Inspector, they will be stood down.

### What powers do Accredited Agents have?

The people appointed as Accredited Agents are permitted to exercise some of the powers of an RAIB Inspector.

For the purpose of recording evidence on behalf of the RAIB, an Accredited Agent appointed for a specific accident is permitted to:

- enter railway property
- enter land adjoining or abutting the railway
- enter a vehicle or structure on the railway or adjacent land
- enter premises that are used in connection with the railway or that the Inspector believes may contain evidence relating to an accident
- take photographs and make written or electronic records

Accredited Agents may not exercise the following powers, which are only granted to the RAIB's Inspectors:

- remove and retain samples
- remove and retain anything for the purpose of examination or analysis
- require access to records or recording equipment.
- require a person to answer questions
- require a person to provide information, disclose records and copy records
- require disclosure of the result of an examination of a person, body or thing
- require a person to certify the truth, accuracy or authenticity of a statement made, of information or a document provided or of a record disclosed.