



New Recruits

We are pleased to announce the recruitment of three experienced new consultants...



Richard Wheldon has worked in the rail industry for 16 years. Having helped develop TPWS

and asset management processes for Railtrack, he joined the Rail Safety and Standards Board where he became a Strategy Advisor and then Head of Management Research. Richard also coordinated RSSB's pioneering work on 'How Safe Is Safe Enough?'



Jonathan Hyde also has a railway background and left BR for the UK health sector in 1996.

Since then Jonathan has been responsible for the development and launching of BT managed ICT systems including electronic patient booking services, managed LAN, WAN, email, Intranet, IP Telephony and IP video services.



Our latest recruit, **Mike Wass**, joined us from Aker Kvaerner Consultancy Services in

February 2007. Mike is an experienced process safety and risk professional whose career spans the oil & gas, pharmaceuticals, utilities and chemical sectors. His ability in high hazard risk assessment methods extends our capability for quantified methods, complementing our strategic approach to risk management in these and other sectors. He also happens to be a talented artist!

Working with Targets

Many texts on performance management present targets as an essential mechanism for driving improvements in performance. Government departments and agencies in the UK have embraced this philosophy and set targets to reduce waiting times, improve literacy, etc. Supporters point out that carefully thought out targets can focus minds, helping organisations set priorities and allocate resources appropriately. Detractors complain of increasing bureaucracy and distorted behaviours resulting in unintended undesirable outcomes.

This debate is spreading to Europe and we have been asked to look at the potential issues associated with setting common safety targets for railway administrations. As part of efforts to improve interoperability of rail services, the EU is encouraging a common approach to safety and this includes setting targets in key areas. However, for a number of reasons, safety performance varies widely across the continent and there are concerns about how to set targets that are meaningful and do not create 'perverse incentives'. To inform this debate, the Rail Safety and Standards Board asked us to review experience of targets in other sectors (most of which is in the UK) and then identify the key principles that need to be understood when setting and applying common safety targets.

Understanding why performance appears to vary between organisations is particularly topical. Two of our current projects are investigating reasons for variations in performance in areas as diverse as administration of housing and council tax benefits, for DWP, and understanding factors which affect perceptions of personal security, for TfL. Our understanding of the theory and common pitfalls is proving particularly useful in separating out the many factors involved.



Risk Based Standards for Roads

In order to realise one of its strategic objectives to improve journey time reliability, the Highways Agency is assessing the feasibility of introducing Passively Safe Portal Signal Gantries onto the network. These will carry the electronic boards necessary to manage variable speed control and are thought to be cheaper than existing gantries which were designed to carry much heavier loads and require barrier protection to the supports.

To inform these considerations, Risk Solutions was asked to develop a risk model that would evaluate the impact of alternative gantry designs on safety risk, journey time reliability and whole life cost. Over the expected life of the gantry, the model determines: safety risk to road workers, road users and the general public; journey disruption from lane closures during construction and maintenance activities; and capital and maintenance costs. The model provides valuable insight into the factors influencing the risk associated with different designs and has been well received by the Agency. It is consistent with the Agency's aspiration to move towards risk-based standards and has been incorporated into a new performance standard for Passively Safe Portal Signal Gantries.



Risk Solutions is a member of PACTS (the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety) and has contributed papers to several conferences - the most recent being the findings from our review of DVLA's medical driver licensing process last year. Delivering cost-effective improvements to safety, particularly in the transport sector, is a topic close to our hearts

so we were delighted when one of our Partners, Alistair Kennedy, was invited recently to join PACTS' Management and Finance Committee. Alistair will be helping plan PACTS' activities to achieve its objective of "protecting human life through the promotion of transport safety for the public benefit".

By Royal Command!

Risk Solutions, in the persons of Chris Rees and Helen Wilkinson (pictured), was honoured with an invitation to a Royal Garden Party in recognition of our work for Defra on the management of foot-and-mouth disease. Dressed in their best bib and tucker, Chris and Helen rubbed shoulders with distinguished guests on a sunny, summer's day at Buckingham Palace.

