Freight Rail Usage and Performance 2019-20 Q1 Statistical Release

Publication date: 26 September 2019

Next publication date: 17 December 2019

Background

This release contains information on rail freight usage and performance in Great Britain with the latest quarterly data to 30 June 2019.

The statistics cover **freight moved**, **freight lifted**, **freight delivery metric (FDM), freight delays per 100 train km** and **freight train km by operator**.

FDM is published for the first time in this release.

Data are sourced from Network Rail, Freight Operating Companies (FOCs) and Department for Transport (DfT).

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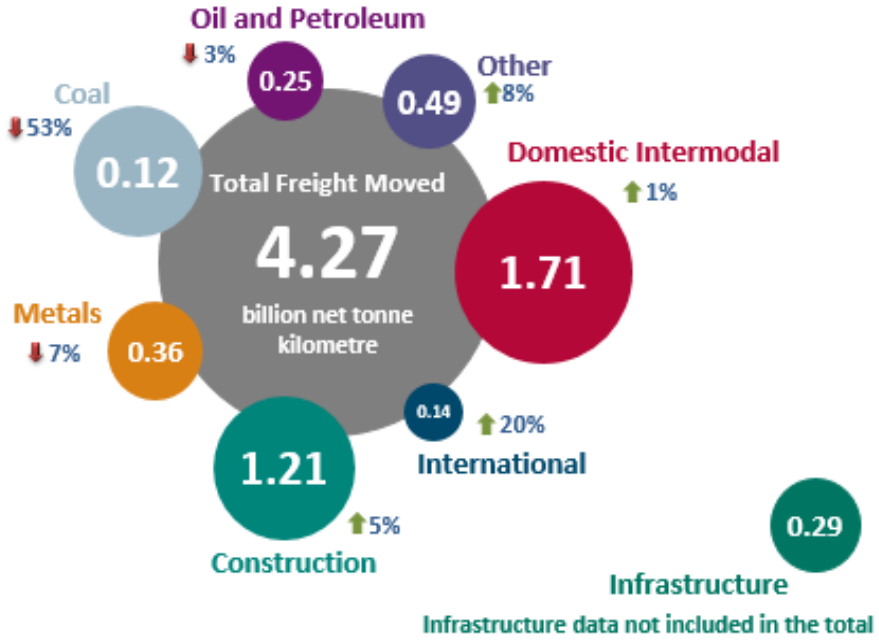
Freight moved by commodity, Great Britain 2019-20 Q1



The total volume of rail **freight moved** was 4.27 billion net tonne kilometres in 2019-20 Q1, a 1% decrease compared with 2018-19 Q1. **Construction** recorded its highest quarterly freight moved with 1.21 billion net tonne kilometres. The highest volume moved was **domestic intermodal** with 1.71 billion net tonne kilometres.

The total amount of **freight lifted** in 2019-20 Q1 was 18.5 million tonnes, a 3% decrease on the same quarter last year.

Freight Delivery Metric reached its highest point in the last five years with 95.3% of trains arriving within 15 minutes of their scheduled arrival time in 2019-20 Q1.

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1. Freight moved

2019-20 Q1

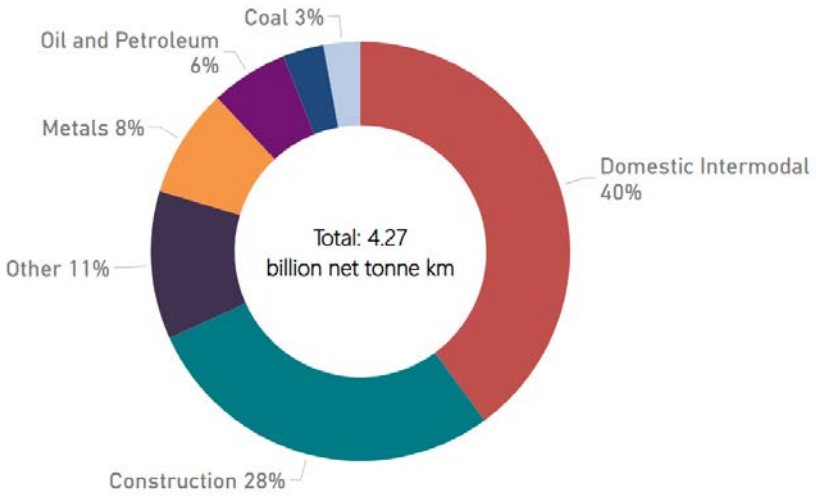
Total rail freight moved by rail, 4.27 billion net tonne kilometres, decreased by 1% (0.04 billion net tonne kilometres) compared to last year, driven by the continued decline in Coal. This decline was partially offset by increases for a number of other commodities.

Construction reached its highest ever level (since start of time-series in 1998-99 Q1) which may have been a result of increased housebuilding and work orders[1].

International traffic increased by 20% compared to the previous year due to increased cross-channel freight traffic[2].

Construction and Domestic Intermodal accounted for just over two-thirds of rail freight moved during 2019-20 Q1.

Figure 1.01: Share by commodity: volume of rail freight moved (billion net tonne km), 2019-20 Q1 (Table 13.7)



Freight moved data, measured in net tonne kilometres, shows the amount of freight which is moved on the railway network, taking into account the weight of the load and the distance carried.

Freight moved is disaggregated by seven commodities which are also summed to provide an overall total freight moved. The seven commodities are coal, metals, construction, oil and petroleum, international, domestic intermodal and other.

In addition to the seven commodities listed above, the amount of goods used for railway engineering work is also reported, under the 'infrastructure' category. This is not included in the totals published in the freight moved tables and charts.

- Quarterly freight moved data are available on the data portal in Table 13.7.

[1] https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-economy-pmi/housebuilding-returns-uk-construction-sector-to-growth-in-april-pmi-idUKKCN1S80K4

[2] https://press.getlinkgroup.com/assets/190723-2019-half-year-results-getlink-pdf-32fc-0791e.html?lang=en (press release, pg 5, Apr-Jun, rail freight)

2. Freight lifted

2019-20 Q1

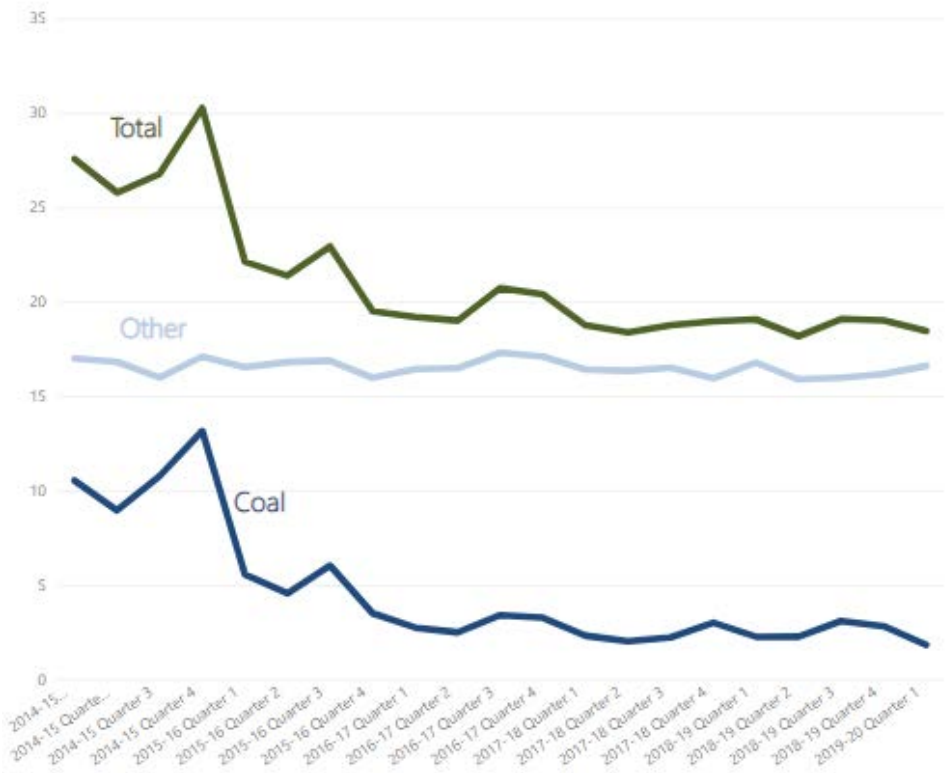
The total amount of freight lifted in 2019-20 Q1 was 18.5 million tonnes, a decrease of 3% on the same quarter last year.

The downtrend trend for coal continues with amount of coal lifted in 2019-20 Q1 recording its lowest amount on record with 1.9 million tonnes, a reduction of 19% compared with 2018-19 Q1. The amount of other freight lifted decreased by 1% to 16.6 million tonnes compared with the same quarter last year.

Freight lifted is the mass of goods carried on the rail network measured in tonnes, excluding the weight of the locomotives and wagons. Unlike freight moved it takes no account of the distance travelled.

Freight lifted information is sourced from the four major Freight Operating Companies (FOCs): DB Cargo UK (formerly EWS), Freightliner Ltd (formerly the BR container business), Direct Rail Services (DRS) and GB Railfreight.

Figure 2.01: Freight lifted (million tonnes), Great Britain, 2014-15 Q1 to 2019-20 Q1 (Table 13.6)



- Quarterly freight lifted data are available on the data portal in: Table 13.6

3. Freight Delivery Metric

The **Freight Delivery Metric (FDM)** is the percentage of freight trains that arrive at their destination within 15 minutes of their scheduled arrival time. Freight trains are only considered to have failed FDM where the delay was caused by Network Rail. The **moving annual average (MAA)** reflects the proportion of trains that met FDM in the past 12 months. In Q4, the MAA also represents the FDM for the financial year.

A higher score indicates higher performance.

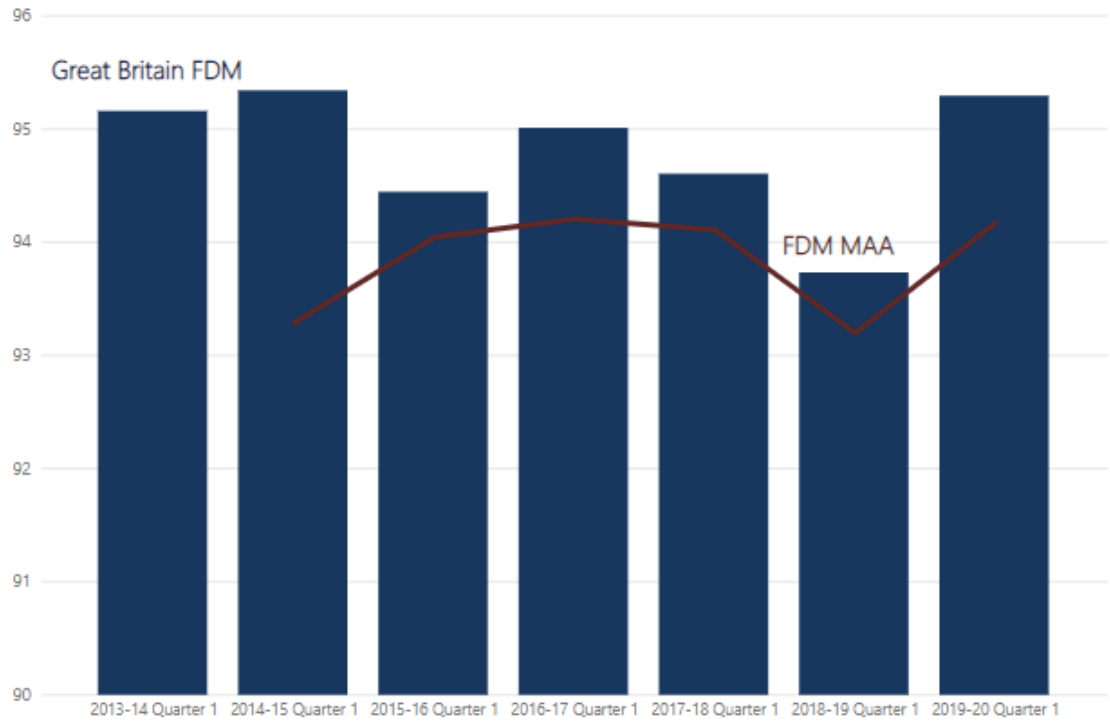
FDM was introduced for CP5 (Control Period 5: 2014-15 – 2018-19), although it has been recorded since the end of the 2012-13. It replaced the Freight Performance Measure (FPM), which was previously used to provide an indication of the punctuality of freight journeys.

National FDM is included in this release for the first time. To reflect the new structure of Network Rail into regions, regional FDM (FDM-R) will soon be made available each period on the data portal.

2019-20 Q1

In 2019-20 Q1, FDM was 95.3%, 1.6 pp higher than in 2018-19 Q1. The quarterly MAA rose to 94.2%, 1.0 pp better than 2018-19 Q1.

Figure 3.01: FDM, Great Britain, 2013-14 Q1 to 2019-20 Q1 (Table 3.41)



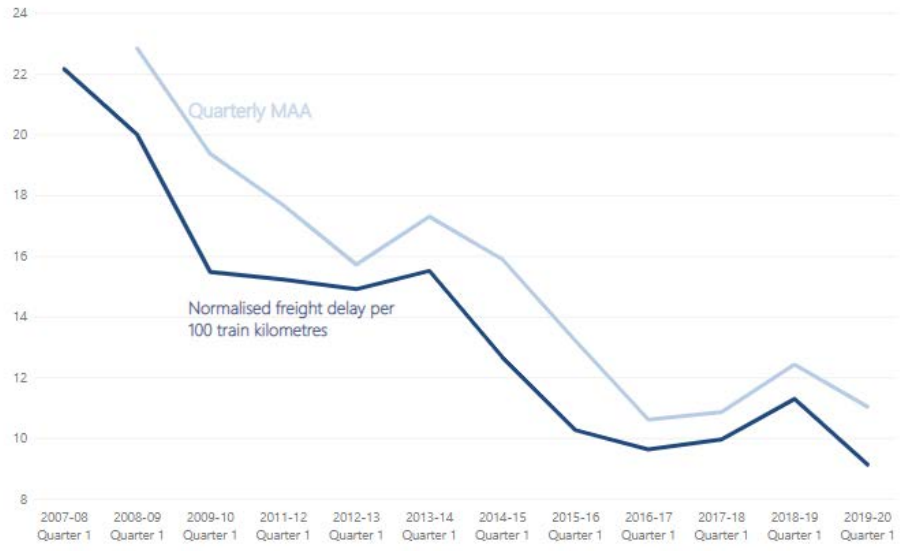
- Quarterly FDM data are available on the data portal in: Table 3.41

4. Freight delay per 100 train kilometres

2019-20 Q1

Freight delay in 2019-20 Q1 was 9.1 minutes per 100 train kilometres, a 19% reduction in delays (improvement) from 2018-19 Q1. This is the lowest level of freight delay since the start of the time series in 2007-08. The 2019-20 Q1 Passenger rail performance shows train delay minutes attributed to Network Rail fell by 15% this quarter compared to last year (see interactive chart).

Figure 4.01: Normalised freight delay per 100 train kilometres, Great Britain, 2007-08 Q1 to 2019-20 Q1 (Table 13.5)



- Quarterly freight delays per 100 train km data are available on the data portal: Table 13.5

Freight delay per 100 train kilometres is a normalised measure of delay experienced by FOCs.

The measure is calculated from the total delay experienced by all GB freight operators divided by their train mileage.

Freight train mileage can fluctuate depending on demand so a normalised measure allows for comparison over time regardless of changing levels of freight traffic on the network.

Freight delay per 100 train kilometres usually peaks in Q3 and Q4 each year, coinciding with the expected periods of adverse weather, during autumn and winter.

5. Freight train kilometres by operator

2019-20 Q1

Total freight train kilometres in 2019-20 Q1 was 8.4 million kilometres, relatively unchanged (under half a percent rise) compared with the same quarter last year.

Three FOCs recorded increases compared with 2018-19 Q1: GB Railfreight (13%), Direct Rail Services (14%) and from a proportionately low base, accounting for 0.4% of total freight kilometres, Devon and Cornwall Railways (463%).

GB Railfreight recorded its highest Q1 train kilometres since the start of the time-series in 2010-11 with 1.8 million kilometres.

Combined, DB Cargo (38%), Freightliner (26%), GB Railfreight (22%) accounted for over four-fifths of total freight train kilometres covered in 2019-20 Q1.

Freight train kilometres is the actual mileage in kilometres operated by FOCs on Network Rail infrastructure

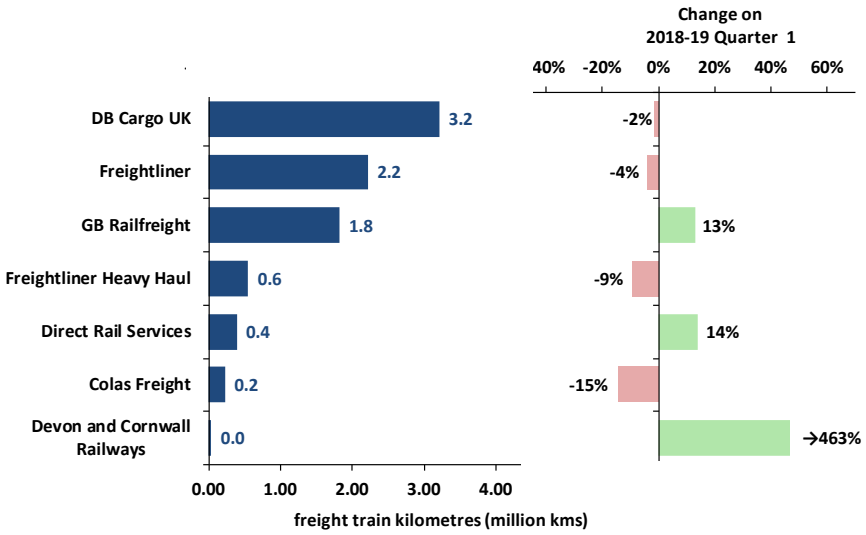
The data is sourced from Network Rail's Track Access Billing System (TABS) and covers only the mileages charged through TABS.

Competition between freight operators means we would expect a greater level of variation in mileage from year to year than in the passenger market.

Not all freight operators have been in operation throughout the time-series, therefore total year on year comparison should be treated with caution.

Please see the accompanying quality report for more information.

Figure 5.01: Freight train kilometres (million kms) by FOC, Great Britain, 2019-20 Q1 (Table 13.25)



- Quarterly freight kilometres by operator data are available on the data portal in Table 13.25.

Annex 1 – List of pre-created reports available on the Data Portal

All data tables can be accessed on the data portal free of charge. The data portal provides on screen data reports, as well as the facility to download data in Excel format. We can provide data in csv format on request.

Freight moved

- Freight moved, 1982-83 to 2018-19 (annual), 1998-99 Q1 to 2019-20 Q1 (quarterly) – Table 13.7

Freight lifted

- Freight lifted, 1982-83 to 2018-19 (annual), 1996-97 Q1 to 2019-20 Q1 (quarterly) – Table 13.6

Freight delivery metric (FDM)

- FDM, 2012-13 Q4 to 2018-19 Q4 (quarterly) – Table 3.41

Freight delay minutes per 100 train kilometres

- Normalised freight delay, 2007-08 to 2018-19 (annual), 2007-08 Q1 to 2019-20 Q1 (quarterly) – Table 13.5

Freight train kilometres by operator

- Freight train kilometres, 2010-11 to 2018-19 (annual), 2010-11 Q1 to 2019-20 Q1 (quarterly) – Table 13.25

Freight market indicators (Q4/annual publications only)

- Number of freight train movements, 2003-04 to 2018-19 – Table 13.10
- Impact on rail haulage, 2004-05 to 2017-18 – Table 13.8
- Rail market share, 1998 to 2017 – Table 13.12

Revisions: There are no revisions to the previously published data. Further details on historic revisions to the data can be found at: Revisions Log.

Methodology and Quality: For more information on data collection and the methodology used to calculate the statistics in this release please see the accompanying Quality Report.

Annex 2

Statistical Releases

This publication is part of ORR's National Statistics accredited statistical releases which consist of annual and quarterly themed releases:

Annual

- Rail Finance;
- Rail Fares Index;
- Rail Safety Statistics;
- Rail Infrastructure, Assets and Environmental;
- Regional Rail Usage;
- *Estimates of Station Usage (not National Statistics)*.

Quarterly

- Passenger Rail Performance;
- Freight Rail Usage and Performance;
- Passenger Rail Usage;
- Passenger Rail Service Complaints.

A full list of publication dates for the next twelve months can be found in the release schedule on the ORR website.

National Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is ORR's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

Our statistical releases hold National Statistics status since being assessed[3] in 2012. Since our assessment we have improved the content, presentation and quality of our statistical releases. Also, in July 2019 we launched our new data portal. We are currently working with the Office for Statistics Regulation (the regulatory arm of the UK Statistics Authority) to conduct a compliance check to ensure we are still meeting the standards of the Code and to therefore reconfirm our National Statistics status.

For more information on how we adhere to the Code please see our compliance statements at: https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/code-of-practice/

For more details, please contact the Statistics Head of Profession Lyndsey Melbourne on 020 7282 3978 or contact rail.stats@orr.gov.uk.

The Department for Transport (DfT) also publishes a range of rail statistics which can be found at DfT Rail Statistics. They also publish road freight statistics which can be found at Road freight: domestic and international statistics and includes statistics on freight transported between road and rail.

[3] https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/media/1334/uksa-assessment.pdf

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