Freight Rail Usage
2018-19 Q3 Statistical Release

Publication date: 7 March 2019

Next publication date: 6 June 2019

Background

This release contains information on rail freight usage in Great Britain with the latest quarterly data referring to October, November and December of 2018.

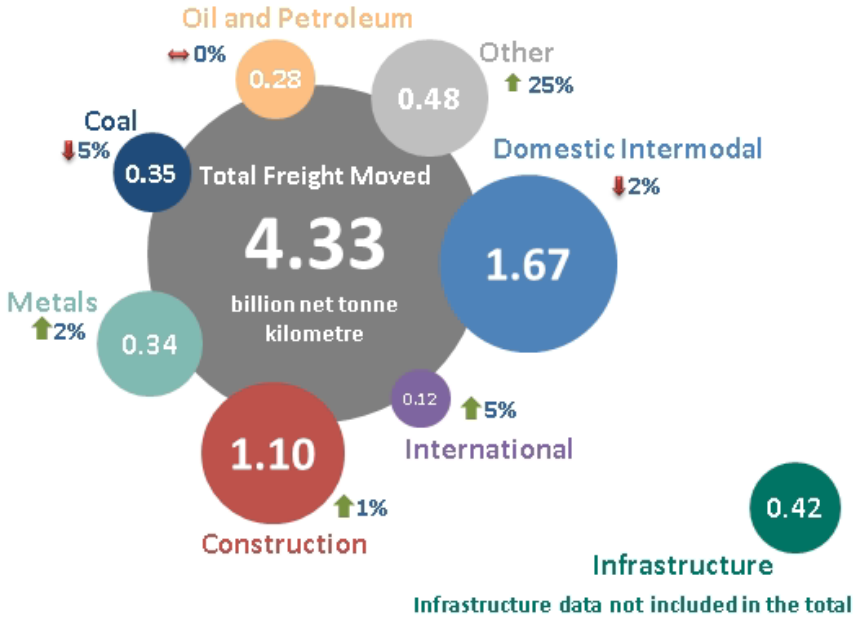
The statistics cover **freight moved** (disaggregated by seven commodities), **freight lifted**, **freight delays per 100 train km, and freight train km by operator.**

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

Contents

Total rail freight moved has increased compared to 2017-18 Q3, with the largest increase being in the 'other' commodity

Freight moved by commodity, Great Britain, 2018-19 Q3



The total volume of rail **freight moved** in 2018-19 Q3 increased by 2% compared to 2017-18 Q3 to 4.3 billion net tonne kilometres. Despite the decreases in Coal and Domestic Intermodal, increases in International, Metals, Construction and Other contributed to the overall increase.

The total amount of **freight lifted** in 2018-19 Q3 was 19.1 million tonnes, an increase of 2% on the same quarter last year.

Normalised freight delay in 2018-19 Q3 dropped to 12.8 minutes per 100 train kilometres, a 10% decrease compared to 2017-18 Q3.

Total **freight train kilometres** was at 8.3 million kilometres in 2018-19 Q3, a 1% increase on 2017-18 Q3.

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1. Freight moved

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.

2018-19 Quarter 3 Results

In 2018-19 Q3, total freight moved was 4.3 billion net tonne kilometres, an increase of 2% on 2017-18 Q3.

Four of the seven commodities recorded an increase in Q3 in comparison with the same quarter last year.

The highest percentage increase was in the 'Other' commodity, which recorded an increase of 25% (98 million net tonne kilometres) compared to Q3 last year. This is the highest year-on year percentage increase for Q3 in the Other commodity since the start of the time series.

'Other' consists of many smaller categories including general merchandise, parcels/mail and domestic waste. As Q3 runs from October to December, rail freight is affected by additional Christmas stock[1], which may add to the volumes for Other and International.

Domestic Intermodal dropped by 2% compared to 2017-18 Q3, but still represents the largest share (39%) of the rail freight moved. Construction and Metals rose by 1% and 2% respectively.

[1] https://www.networkrail.co.uk/how-freight-delivers-christmas-in-numbers/

Figure 1.01: The volume of rail freight moved (billion net tonne km), Great Britain, 1998-99 Q1 to 2018-19 Q3 (Table 13.7)

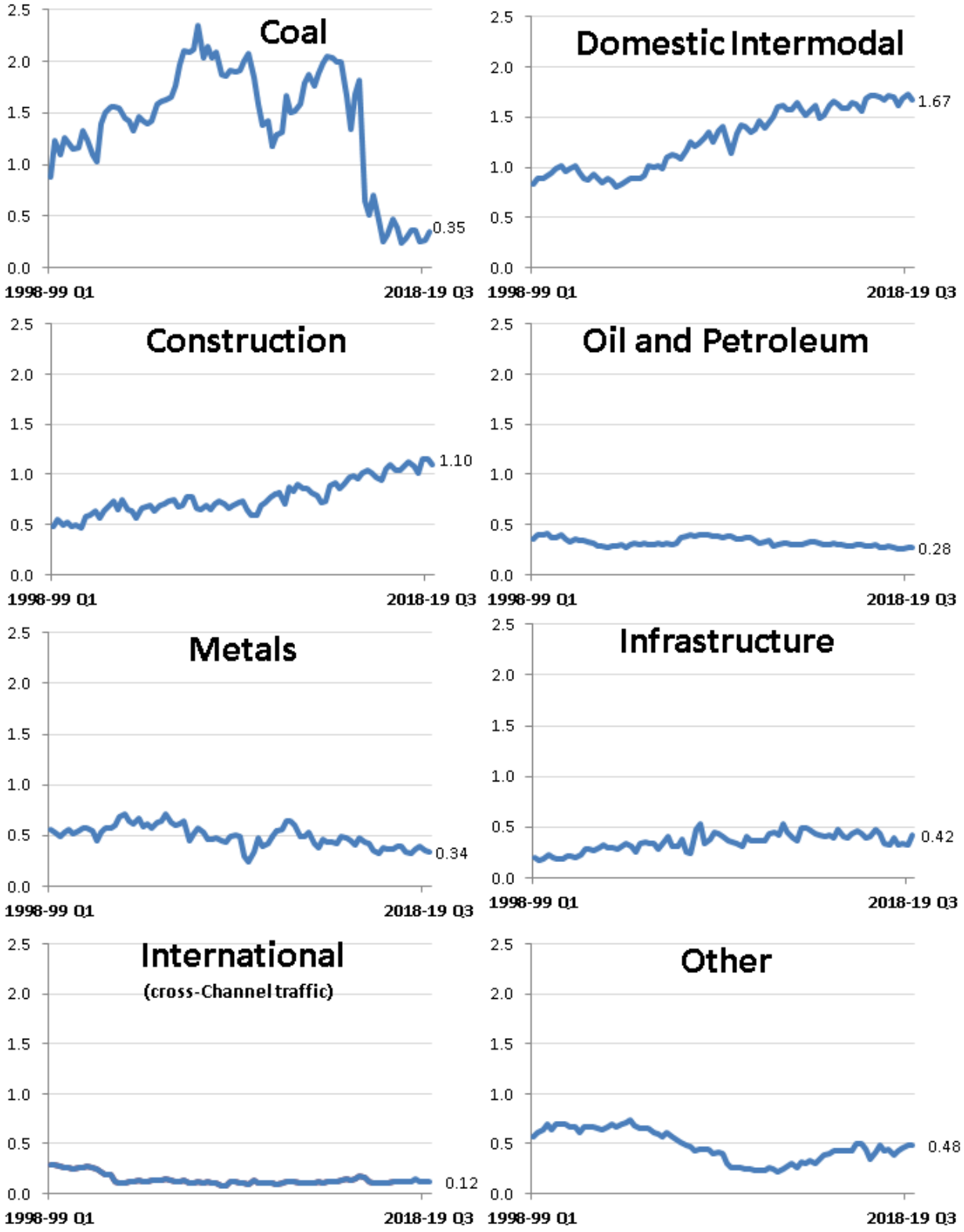


Figure 1.02: The volume of rail freight moved (billion net tonne km), 2018-19 Q3 compared to 2017-18 Q3 (Table 13.7)

	Billion net tonne km	*Compared to 2017-18 Q3*	
Domestic Intermodal	1.67	2%	**Domestic intermodal decreased by 2% compared to 2017-18 Q3. This is a small dip within a wider growing trend in this commodity over the last few years.**
Construction	1.10	1%	**Construction has continued to rise year-on-year. With a 1% increase compared to 2017-18 Q3, this is the highest total in the time series for Q3.**
Other	0.48	25%	**Other goods moved by freight rail has risen by 25% compared to Q3 last year. It was also the commodity with the highest year-on-year increase in the previous quarter (Q2 on Q2).**
Coal	0.35	5%	**Coal usage continues to decline following the decision to cut coal emissions in 2014-15. This is the lowest total recorded for Q3 since the start of the time series.**
Metals	0.34	2%	**Metals increased by 2% compared to Q3 last year; a small increase against an overall decline in recent years.**
Oil and Petroleum	0.28	0%	**Oil and Petroleum remained at the same level of rail freight moved as in 2017-18 Q3.**
International	0.12	5%	**International increased by 5% compared to the same quarter last year. This is the highest amount recorded for Q3 since 2014-15.**

A breakdown of the commodity types can be found on page 11 of the quality report.

2. Freight lifted

2018-19 Quarter 3 Results

The total amount of freight lifted in 2018-19 Q3 was 19.1 million tonnes, an increase of 2% compared to 2017-18 Q3.

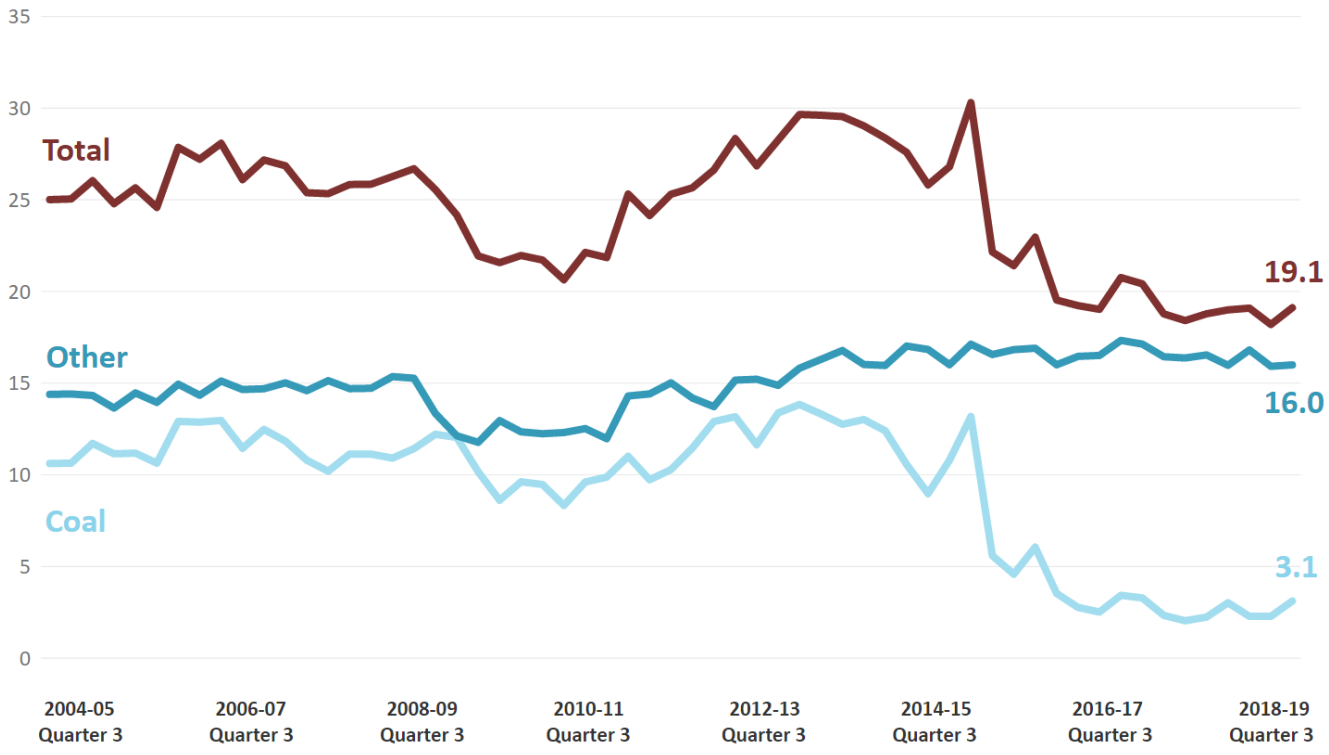
The amount of coal lifted in 2018-19 Q3 was 3.1 million tonnes, an increase of 0.9 million tonnes (up 39%) compared to the same quarter last year. This was offset somewhat by the 3% decrease in other freight lifted (all other commodities combined), but still significant enough to cause an overall increase.

In this quarter, Coal accounted for 16% of the rail freight lifted, compared to 12% in 2017-18 Q3.

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

Freight lifted data is sourced from the four major FOCs: DB Cargo UK, Freightliner Ltd, Direct Rail Services (DRS) and GB Railfreight.

Figure 2.01: Freight lifted (million tonnes), Great Britain, 2004-05 Q1 to 2018-19 Q3 (Table 13.6)



3. Freight delay per 100 train kilometres

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. This dataset is provisional as delay data can be revised as part of the delay attribution process.

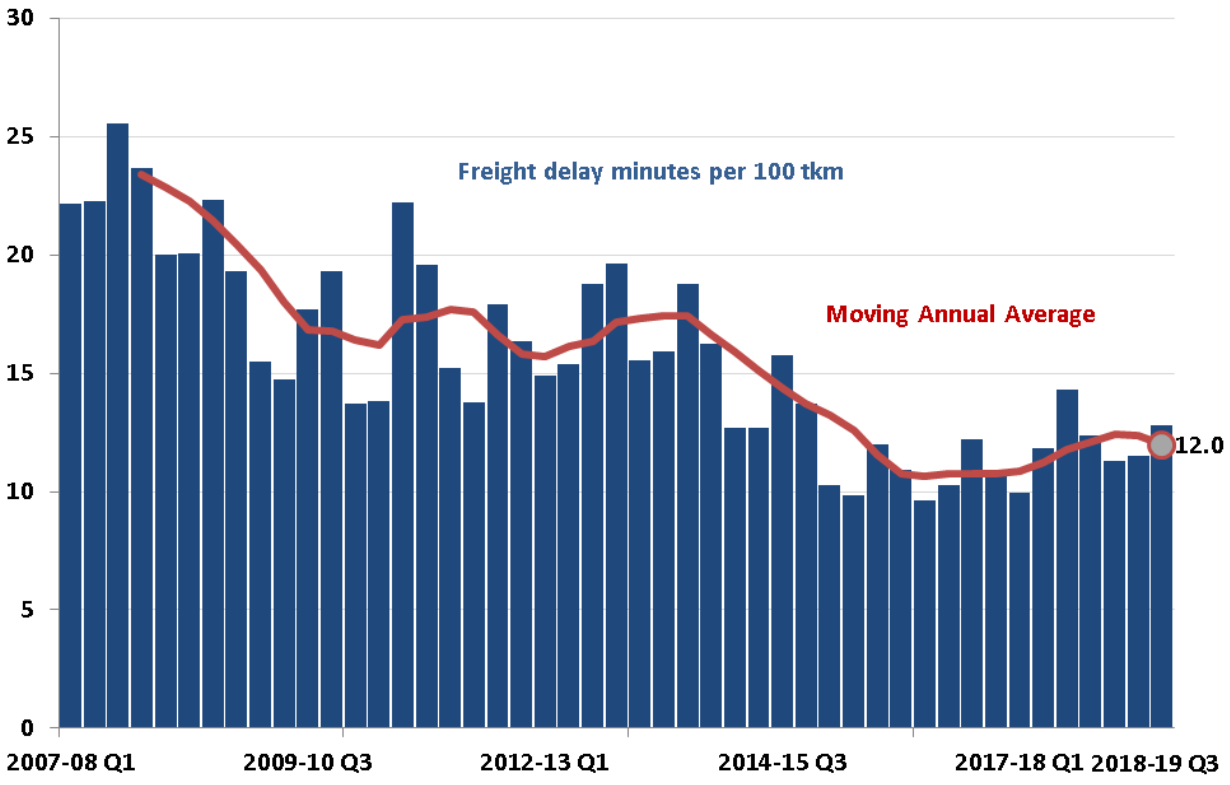
Freight train mileage can fluctuate depending on demand so a normalised measure allows for comparison over time regardless of changing levels of freight traffic on the network. Freight delay per 100 train kilometres tends to peak in Q3 and Q4 each year, coinciding with the expected periods of adverse weather, during autumn and winter.

The **Freight Delivery Metric (FDM)** is another measure of freight train delay. It is based on the percentage of freight trains that arrive at their destination within 15 minutes of their scheduled arrival time. Results and more information can be found in the quarterly Passenger and Freight Rail Performance statistical release.

2018-19 Quarter 3 Results

Freight delay decreased by 10% in 2018-19 Q3 compared to the same quarter last year to 12.8 minutes per 100 train kilometres.

Figure 3.01: Normalised freight delay per 100 train kilometres, Great Britain, 2007-08 Q1 to 2018-19 Q3 (Table 13.5)



4. Freight train kilometres by operator

2018-19 Quarter 3 Results

In 2018-19 Q3, total freight train kilometres run was 8.3 million, a 1% increase on the same period last year.

The largest freight operator, DB Cargo's total fell by 4% from 3.2 to 3.1 million kilometres in 2018-19 Q3 compared to the same quarter last year, and their overall share dropped from 39% to 37%.

The third largest operator, GB Railfreight's total increased by 29% to 1.9 million kilometres. Their share has increased from 18% to 23% compared to 2017-18 Q3.

Together, the three largest operators, DB Cargo, Freightliner Intermodal and GB Railfreight, accounted for 86% of all freight train kilometres travelled in 2018-19 Q3.

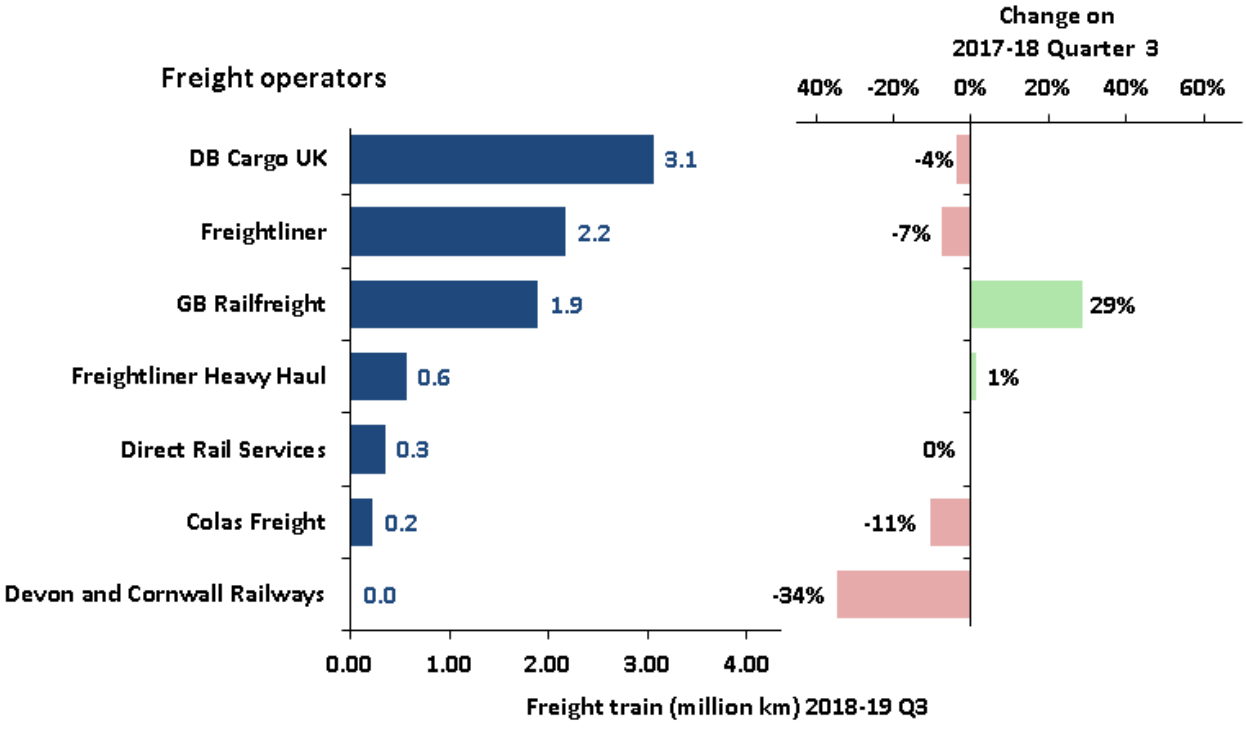
Freight train kilometres is the actual mileage in kilometres operated by FOCs on Network Rail infrastructure

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.

Figure 4.01: Freight train kilometres by FOC, Great Britain, 2018-19 Q3 (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 and print the report. We can provide data in csv format on request.

Freight moved

- Freight moved, 1982-83 to 2017-18 (annual), 1998-99 Q1 to 2018-19 Q3 (quarterly) – Table 13.7

Freight lifted

- Freight lifted, 1982-83 to 2017-18 (annual), 1996-97 Q1 to 2018-19 Q3 (quarterly) – Table 13.6

Freight delay minutes per 100 train kilometres

- Normalised freight delay, 2007-08 to 2017-18 (annual), 2007-08 Q1 to 2018-19 Q3 (quarterly) – Table 13.5

Freight train kilometres by operator

- Freight train kilometre, 2010-11 to 2017-18 (annual), 2010-11 Q1 to 2018-19 Q3 (quarterly) – Table 13.25

Freight market indicators (Q4/annual publications only)

- Number of freight train movements, 2003-04 to 2017-18 – Table 13.10
- Impact on rail haulage, 2004-05 to 2016-17 – Table 13.8
- Rail market share, 1998 to 2016 – Table 13.12

Revisions: There have been no revisions to the previously published dataset. Further details on historic revisions to the data set can be found on the Revisions Log.

Methodology: 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 and Freight Rail Performance;
- Freight Rail Usage;
- 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.

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, which includes statistics on freight transported between road and rail.

This publication is available at orr.gov.uk

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at orr.gov.uk