



Rail environment statistics development plan

18 June 2026



Introduction

1. The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) is committed to the ongoing review and improvement of its published statistics to ensure they are of the highest quality and public value. As part of this commitment, we are publishing this development plan for our Rail environment statistics, focusing on the official statistics in development 'measures' recently added to this publication.
2. This document describes our plans to develop our Rail environment statistics including work to improve data completeness, develop the methodology used to produce the statistics and seek and respond to user feedback. These actions are intended to support the transition of the official statistics in development to official statistics.

Background

ORR has published annual Rail environment statistics (formerly Rail emissions) since 2019. These statistics previously covered rail traction energy consumption from electricity and diesel and estimates of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) emissions for passenger and freight train operators across Great Britain.

From the April 2023 to March 2024 release, we expanded the publication to include new measures published as official statistics in development:

- Non-traction energy consumption – electricity and gas used in stations, offices, depots, workshops, and service buildings;
- Water consumption – mains water used for domestic, sanitary, and fleet maintenance purposes;
- Waste generation – all waste produced, including materials for disposal, recycling or reuse.

To produce these statistics, we collect the data directly from passenger and freight train operators on an annual basis.

Purpose

Our rail environment statistics are used by train operators, regulators, policymakers and the public to better understand and monitor rail's broader environmental impact. Publishing these statistics provides transparency around the railway industry's environmental impact, an area of growing interest for both the sector and the wider public.

We introduced the additional measures as official statistics in development to improve transparency and provide a more complete and representative picture of total environmental impact across the rail network.

Development plan

Statistical classification

We have classified statistics relating to the new measures as [official statistics in development](#), to be transparent about current limitations and to encourage early use and feedback while further development continues.

The main reasons for classifying these new measures as official statistics in development:

- As we haven't published data on these new measures before we are unclear on the value of these statistics to users.
- Not all operators were able to provide data in the first year of collection, and some gaps remain, limiting our confidence in the completeness of the published statistics.
- For some measures, data definitions and reporting scope are still being refined.
- Operators manage different volumes and types of infrastructure. Consequently, data for these measures reflects operational scope as well as performance, so direct comparisons between operators can be misleading.

Planned developments

This development plan outlines the work we will take forward to strengthen the new official statistics in development within the Rail environment publication, including the expected and ongoing actions set out below:

- Work closely with industry, drawing on feedback from operators and input from Rail Safety and Standards Board and Department for Transport to support more standardised reporting framework with shared definitions and more alignment on data collection.
- Improve supporting documentation to strengthen our user's understanding of how operational contexts affect comparisons between operators and over time.
- Periodically review methodologies with industry experts to align with evolving environmental reporting standards.

Our aim is to remove the 'official statistics in development' classification for the 2026-27 publication (expected to be published in autumn 2027), subject to the successful delivery of the actions set out above, feedback from stakeholders and an assessment confirming that the statistics fully meet the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value.

User engagement

We welcome feedback from all stakeholders, including train operators, industry bodies, and the wider public, on the usefulness and presentation of these statistics. Please send your comments or questions to rail.stats@orr.gov.uk.

We will update this development plan as our work progresses, maintaining high standards of quality and relevance in line with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).



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