

Rail safety hailed after six years with no deaths



The Cumbria train crash of February 2007, in which a Glasgow pensioner died. Picture: Getty

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Published on **Saturday 23 February 2013 03:00**

TOMORROW marks an unprecedented six years with no passenger deaths on Britain's railways, in stark contrast to a road death every six hours, campaigners Railfuture said today.

The group praised the "astonishing run of safety" following the death of Glasgow pensioner Margaret Masson, 84, in the Virgin Trains derailment in Cumbria on 23 February 2007.

Railfuture spokesman Bruce Williamson said: "We congratulate the railway industry and its staff for continuing to run a safe railway for passengers.

"This is in contrast to the roads, where more passengers die on the roads in six hours than have died on Britain's railways in the last six years."

Total road deaths in Britain increased by 51 to 1,901 in 2011 - the last year for which figures are available.

The improved rail safety record follows a series of fatal crashes, including a train hitting a car on a level crossing in Berkshire in 2004, killing a total of seven people.

The same number of people were killed in a derailment at Potters Bar in Hertfordshire in 2002, while ten died after a car plunged onto tracks in Yorkshire in 2001 and four were killed in a derailment at Hatfield in Hertfordshire in 2000.

A spokesman for the Association of Train Operating Companies said: "The safety of passengers and staff will always be the number one priority for everyone in the industry and thanks to that commitment our railways are among the safest in Europe."

A Network Rail spokesman said: "Every day in Britain, almost 4 million people travel on one of the safest, most reliable railways in Europe.

"Safety is at the heart of everything we do and we will continue to do all we can to make the railway even safer for our workforce and the travelling public."

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