

RAIL TRAFFIC SAFETY



In 2001, the situation with rail traffic safety was reasonably stable. It must be noted that neither during the account period, nor during the whole of the previous decade *Latvian Railway* had not permitted serious violations of traffic safety and accidents, and there was not a single case of passenger injury or death in which railway service could be blamed.

In *Latvian Railway* the working stability is ensured by the internal traffic safety and labour protection system, and its measures must be observed by all structural units of the railway as well as private administrators of particular infrastructure sites and private carriers. In relation to this, proposals have been prepared about modifications in regulations of the technical operation; it is envisaged to work out the system of internal monitoring for each railway administrator and carrier.

In compliance with the restructuring plan at the end of 2001 the first subsidiary of *Latvian Railway* – the stock company *Pasažieru vilciens* (Passenger Train) was established. In relation with the proposals submitted by this company and other operators about receiving the permit for public use of railway infrastructure, the Commission for Examining the Applications for Safety Certificates of *Latvian Railway* acquires more important role and it works in close collaboration with the Technical Inspection of the Company.

The railway transport activities create a territory where the employees are subject to risk, and usually representatives of several specialities operate in these areas. Therefore one of the main tasks is to take the necessary labour protection measures to prevent risks, ensure safe

and harmless to health working environment. Labour protection system is being organised in compliance with labour protection legislation principles by evaluating the risk level of the labour environment and performing internal supervision.

Assistance and fire-trains as well as every emergency service group is fully equipped with respiration devices of compressed air designed by *Drager* company that enable working in dangerous areas for much longer period of time. To improve the technical condition of assistance trains two radio stations *Kenwood* and *Motorola* were put into operation. Besides, in the reference year for transshipment operations of hazardous freight they started to use synthetic material ropes as well as introduced into operation absorber pumps for collecting oil products from water surface.

In several stations emergency situation localisation and liquidation simulations were organised for hazardous freight shipments. This training was attended by station emergency groups, involving assistance and fire trains, fire fighting units of towns and districts, station-masters on duty, management personnel from different operational units and the Freight Shipment Department. The instruction on steering activities in emergency situations with hazardous freight was revised and published, as well as other relevant instructions were regularly adjusted.

To improve the further cooperation with the State Fire-fighting and Rescue Service agreements have been concluded on information exchange and collaboration during fire outbreaks and other emergency situations.

With regret it must be noted that thefts of non-ferrous metals still continue. If in the beginning of 1990-ties only copper spare parts were stolen from electrotechnical service unit and the railwaymen had to replace them with less safe steel analogues, then at present non-ferrous rolling stock components get stolen. In 2001, 214 theft cases of non-ferrous metals were registered as a result of which the railway company incurred losses amounting to LVL 26302.

In 2001, there were 23 collisions on level crossings – 25 people were injured and 11 of them died. Although the number of collisions has increased only by one case in comparison with 2000, the number of people injured and killed in recent years has reached unprecedented level. In 2001, all the collisions on level crossings took place because of violated traffic regulations by the road vehicle drivers. It is quite alarming to see that the drivers' irresponsibility increases and the consequences of such collisions tend to become more serious. Significant moral and material damages are caused not only to the car owners and the injured but also to the *Latvian Railway* Company. The fault of the railway employees in these collisions was not discovered, nevertheless more attention should be paid to the level crossing areas.