

8. For the future

The Japan Transport Safety Board, the JTSB, implemented objectively the investigation on the accidents with fatality occurred in class three and class four level crossings without crossing gate, showed the probable causes in the railway accident investigation reports, and made clear the dangerous factors such as the sighting status of the level crossing and the train velocity, etc., and stated the measures to prevent the recurrence.

On the other hand, in order to eliminate accidents in the level crossing without crossing gate having the high danger potentially, it is necessary to implement steadily the concrete measures to abolish or to prepare crossing gate and road warning device even in the other level crossings, and to plan the reduction of the number of class three and class four level crossings in early stage.

For this reason, the JTSB plans to promote investigation and researches required to offer the proposals on the prevention of accidents such as to comprehend the actual status of the high risk class three and class four level crossings as described in 3. (3), such as high train velocity and large number of operating trains, etc., as the theme of the analysis to prevent accidents in the JTSB.

9. Conclusion

The JTSB expects, by dispatching information via the investigation reports, etc., for the railway operators, the local government, etc., who take the responsibility on traffic policy and the management and control of the roads in the regions, the people living in the region, to recognize commonly the actual status of level crossings including the dangerous factors, and the measures for the safety, and lead to the promotion of discussions in the relevant parties and concrete actions.

The JTSB will conduct the investigation on the accidents with fatality in class three and class four level crossings continuously, and concentrate our efforts as to contribute to the improvement of safety in the level crossing, by effort to provide the required information including proposals on the measures to prevent the recurrence.

To edit this bulletin, the JTSB expressed its sincere thanks to many relevant parties, including Chikusei City Office, Kanto Tetsudo Co., Ltd., Fuji Kyuko Co., Ltd.

Comment from the Chairperson

The 16 persons were dead in the level crossing without crossing gate in FY2016. It was sad that seven persons were dead, including the student of elementary school riding bicycle and young person boarding automobile, by the end of January in this fiscal year.

The railways have been prepared all over the country and composed the convenient traffic network in Japan. Recent years, the convenience has been improved still more, as there are the routes between major cities where trains are operated in high speed nearly to 120 km/h. However, the level crossings without crossing gates have been existed actually in these high speed routes. It is said that class four level crossing without crossing gate nor road warning device is same as the pedestrian cross the crosswalk in the superhighway, however, it can be said that class four level crossing is more dangerous considered that the train require the several times longer braking distance compared to automobiles.

The Article 40 "level crossing" in the "Ministerial Ordinance Providing for the Technological Standard for Railways", Ministerial Ordinance No.151 prescribed by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, 2001, prescribed that the level crossing shall equip the level crossing protection device, such as the crossing gate and the road warning device. However, the provisions for the interim measures prescribe as "it can conform to the conventional cases", as the results, about 2,700 class four level crossings are still remained. I felt from the bottom of my heart through the analyses to prevent accidents that I would like to ask the operators sides to promote to change to class one level crossing positively, for the safe and stable operation of the trains in the main line where many trains are operated in high speed, even though it seems difficult to abolish level crossing due to the convenience, etc., of the neighboring residents.

The Accident Prevention Analyst Official, Assistant to Director for Management
Secreatariat, JAPAN TRANSPORT SAFETY BOARD
1-6-1, YOTSUYA TOWER, Shinjuku-ku Tokyo, 160-0004, Japan
15th Floor, Yotsuya Tower
Phone : +81-3-5267-5205 FAX 03-5253-168
URL : <http://www.mlit.go.jp/jtsb/index.html>
e-mail : hqt-jtsb_bunseki@gxb.mlit.go.jp
Opinions for the JTSB Digest and request for the course on demand are welcomed.