

Frequently asked Questions

RISAS: the Railway Industry Supplier Approval Scheme

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What is the “Railway Industry Supplier Approval Scheme”?

The Railway Industry Supplier Approval Scheme (RISAS) is the GB mainline rail industry’s “not for profit” scheme for the assessment and certification of suppliers of critical products and services.

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What is RISAS for?

RISAS supports Network Rail, the train operators and all “client” organisations in their management of supply chain and asset maintenance risk by providing an independent and rigorous assessment of a supplier’s capability to consistently provide critical products and services in accordance with customer requirements.

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What does RISAS apply to?

A list of RISAS critical materials and services has been developed and will continue to evolve, where it is anticipated that economic efficiencies and improved assurance can be delivered. The current list of RISAS Product Groups is available to view and download by clicking on the link [RISAS Product Groups](#). Suppliers can seek RISAS Approval for these Product Groups and customers can select RISAS Approved suppliers, entering into a specific contract for a particular material or service.

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Where has RISAS come from?

RISAS was collaboratively developed by GB mainline rail companies in response to recommendations made in the Public Inquiry report into the Ladbroke Grove accident. The report recommended that, “Suppliers of products and services of a safety-critical kind, for use on, or in regard to, the railways in Great Britain should be required to hold an accreditation as a condition of being able to engage in that activity”, and in response the industry established a project team to develop the most efficient solution. Following extensive consultation, RISAS was launched in May 2006.

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How does RISAS fit in with existing supplier approval schemes?

RISAS is not designed to duplicate effort, In fact precisely the opposite. Because RISAS is targeted at the critical end of the supply market the assessment is rigorous and comprehensive, meaning that as Suppliers gain RISAS Product Group approval, customers will use them to procure critical products with confidence, without the need to conduct their own supplier audits, or to rely on other third party assessments and audits.

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Who runs RISAS?

Operation of RISAS is overseen by cross industry representation through a formally constituted governance Board, drawing it’s authority from the Board of the Railway Safety and Standards Board (RSSB). Day to day administration of RISAS is undertaken by RSSB.

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Who carries out the RISAS assessments?

The assessment of the adequacy of suppliers' procedures, practices and competence to manage risks that arise from the specialist nature of railway industry applications is carried out by independent third party assessment agencies who have been accredited as Railway Industry Supplier Approval Bodies (RISABS).

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How are the RISABS selected and accredited?

RISABS are accredited by RSSB in accordance with the requirements contained within RSSB document [RISAS004/01 Accreditation of Approval Bodies within the Railway Industry Supplier Approval Scheme](#). Parties interested in becoming an accredited RISAB can apply to RSSB who will review their application in rigorous detail and carry out the accreditation process as detailed in RISAS/004/01, which can be viewed or downloaded from the RISAS website www.risas.co.uk.

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What is "the scope"?

"The scope" refers to the precise products and services agreed with the supplier for assessment under RISAS, in accordance with the listing of RISAS scheme Product Groups. This will be the basis for the assessment and, if successful, what the RISAS certificate will cover.

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Who pays for RISAS?

RISABS pay RSSB for the accreditation process and suppliers pay RISABS for assessment and approval. There is no standard price for becoming RISAS approved as the cost of the RISAB's assessment will depend on the scope. However, suppliers should be able to obtain competitive quotes from the available RISABS. Costs of administering RISAS are borne by RSSB. There is no charge to "clients" of RISAS, who can freely interrogate the RISAS website www.risas.co.uk (password protected) for information on current status of the scheme and details of approved suppliers.

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What is involved in being assessed by a RISAB?

The assessment is rigorous and comprehensive and most companies find this to be a positive process and part of their commitment to continuous improvement. Details of what is covered are contained within the document [RISAS003/01 "Railway Industry Supplier Approval Scheme, Supplier Assessment Module](#)

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Where can I find information about accredited RISABS?

There are a number of accredited RISABS and this is likely to continue to expand. RISABS operate in a commercial market and suppliers potentially seeking RISAS certification should be able to obtain competitive quotations before engaging a RISAB. The current listing of accredited RISABS and the scope they are accredited to certificate is kept up to date on the RISAS website, where you will need to register as a supplier and be provided with your login and password. www.risas.co.uk.

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Will one RISAS certificate cover my company?

Not necessarily as it will only cover the RISAS Product Groups and the sites they are supplied from as agreed in the scope, and assessed by the RISAB.

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How long does a RISAS certificate last?

For a first assessment it would be expected to be up to one year. Re-accreditation may be expected to be up to 2, or possibly 3 years.

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Will my previous 'history' be taken into account?

The RISAB will examine the NIR database and review any previous audits as a part of their assessment. In addition the RISAB will take into account the maturity of the suppliers system when deciding the duration of certification.

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Is the RISAB assessment confidential?

Yes it is, although the RISAS Board through its governance arrangements has the right to see any documents if necessary. Of course the auditee can choose to publicise the report if he feels that it is in his company's interest.

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What happens if a supplier fails the Assessment?

If a supplier fails the initial assessment or a re-assessment, they are entitled to use the RISAS Appeals Procedure. However, if an extreme safety issue is identified which, even after discussion with on-site senior management remains an issue, the RISAB is duty bound to inform the RISAS Board. The RISAS Board will review and if necessary inform industry duty holders, to enable them to take any necessary actions.

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What about Sub-Suppliers?

A supplier's processes and procedures will need to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the RISAB that their supply chain risks are adequately controlled. Clearly, one way to demonstrate this would be to use sub-suppliers that have a relevant RISAS certificate covering their scope of supply.

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What about non-RISAS approved suppliers?

A rail industry Duty Holder, or supplier, will need to have other adequate arrangements in place, either internally, or via a competent third party, to provide the necessary level of assurance that critical products and services are being purchased from competent suppliers.

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Where can I find further information about the scheme and its status?

Initially, visit the RISAS web site at www.risas.co.uk

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Where do Link-up Audit (PROOF) and IRIS fit in to the picture?

Currently RISAS is targeting critical products and services for supply and repair of rolling stock components, whereas currently Link-up audits predominately cover non-train items, and IRIS is a UNIFE initiative targeted at components for new trains. However, as RISAS is targeted at the critical end of the supply market the assessment is rigorous and comprehensive, meaning that as the RISAS Product Groups expand and suppliers gain RISAS approval, customers will use them to procure critical products with confidence, without the need to rely on other third party assessments and audits.

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What will RISAS do for me?

- If you are a **supplier**, RISAS approval should save you time and effort in reducing repeated audits going over the same ground. The rigorous RISAS assessment is accepted throughout the rail industry.
- If you are a **customer**, you will be able to rely upon products from RISAS approved suppliers without the need to routinely undertake audits yourself, or pay for third party audits. Of course, you must still monitor the performance of your suppliers and their products.
- If you are a **RISAB**, you have the opportunity to add value to the industry's assurance processes, performing assessments and providing valuable certification, using procedures closely aligned to VAB or NoBo processes.
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What formal documentation is available about RISAS?

Four documents describing RISAS and its operational processes are available from www.risas.co.uk

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Who sits on RISAS's governing Board?

The RISAS Board's members provide cross industry representation and are drawn from the main Railway Group constituents. Currently the Board is comprised of the following:

<u>Railway Group Constituent</u>	<u>Representative</u>	<u>Company</u>
Passenger train operating companies	Bryan Donnelly	ATOC
Freight train operating companies	Simon Grego	Freightliner
Rolling stock companies	Tim Dugher	Angel Trains
Rail Safety and Standards Board	John Abbott	Rail Safety and Standards Board
Suppliers	Francis How	Railway Industry Association

Infrastructure contractors

Liz Quinn

Grant Rail

Network Rail

Stuart Norfolk

Network Rail

Chairperson Tim Dugher

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If I go to the time, trouble and expense of gaining a RISAS certificate, will I still be audited by other rail companies?

RISAS is targeted at the critical end of the supply market and therefore the assessment is rigorous and comprehensive, meaning that customers will use RISAS certificated suppliers to procure critical products with confidence, without the need to rely on other third party assessments and audits. It is highly unlikely that UK mainline rail operators, rolling stock companies, Network Rail and other Railway Group companies will need to perform their own audits unless there are specific contractual, relationship or performance issues that need to be addressed by mutual consent. However, acceptance of RISAS certification cannot be assumed for non-Railway Group organisations such as London Underground, light rail operators and other suppliers to the industry.

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Do I need to keep up my ISO 9001 certification?

If your company operated to a certificated Quality Management System at the time of your RISAS assessment, then this will have been taken into account within your RISAS audit and certification. It will therefore need to be maintained to the same standard to ensure continued compliance with the RISAS standard.

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Does the RISAS assessment take account of an organisations environmental management systems and sustainability issues?

Currently the RISAS assessment criteria does not include reference to environmental / sustainability issues. However this is likely to change, but no timescale for the introduction of environmental criteria has been set as yet.

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How can I find out if a company is progressing towards RISAS certification?

The best way is to ask your contact at the company. If they are prepared to provide you with the information, you could obtain independent confirmation from their RISAB concerning progress and timescales.

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What happens if a RISAS certificated supplier delivers defective products?

Possession of a RISAS certificate cannot be a complete guarantee that problems will never occur. It therefore remains imperative that clients should implement and maintain effective performance measurement and monitoring as part of their ongoing relationship with their supplier. Mutually agreed problem resolution and escalation processes should be a part of this relationship.

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What happens if a RISAS certificated supplier delivers seriously defective products?

In the unlikely event of ongoing serious issues, clients can raise these with RSSB who will investigate (usually in conjunction with the RISAB who approved them). RSSB may require remedial action from the supplier and / or the RISAB, and may remove certification from the supplier and / or accreditation from the RISAB.

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I would like to gain RISAS certification, but I can't find my products on the list?

Contact the RISAS scheme administrator on +44 (0) 203 142 5376 or risas.admin@rssb.co.uk

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I would like to buy from a RISAS certificated supplier but I can't find the products on the list?

Contact the RISAS scheme administrator on +44 (0) 203 142 5376 or risas.admin@rssb.co.uk

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How much does it cost to gain RISAS Certification?

There is no standard price for becoming RISAS approved as the cost of the RISAB's assessment will depend on the scope, number of sites, complexity, the effectiveness of the quality system, etc. However, suppliers should be able to obtain competitive quotes from the available RISABS. If costs seem excessive the supplier should contact RISAS for assistance as there may be some misunderstanding about the required scope.

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How long does it take to gain RISAS Certification?

This will depend on the scope and number of sites etc., the other variable factor would be how far away from the required criteria a company is. However the process typically takes from 6 to 10 months from first contacting a RISAB.

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Who accepts RISAS Certification?

RISAS is supported and recognised by the UK mainline Railway Group, including the train operating companies, rolling stock companies, freight operating companies and Network Rail. However, acceptance of RISAS certification cannot be assumed for non-Railway Group organisations such as London Underground, light rail operators and other suppliers to the industry.

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What is the difference between, accreditation, approval and certification?

Accreditation: The granting of rights to an agent to act as a Certification or Approval Body.

Certification: A formal process of issuing certificates (hard or soft copy) that provides the holder with documentary evidence that a successful assessment has taken place.

Approval: Acceptance by the issuing body that an organisation meets the requirements for Accreditation or certification as defined above.

*In terms of the RISAS scheme, this means that RSSB **Approves** the **Accreditation** of a RISAB who can then **Approve** the **Certification** of suppliers of specific products / services.*

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What is the difference between an audit and an assessment?

“Assessment” refers to the whole process carried out by the RISAB up to the point of Certification of the supplier. “Audit” refers to a specific visit to a specific site to carry out physical checks to ascertain conformity with criteria. It is possible therefore that an “Assessment” could involve a number of “Audits”.

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