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Lessons for railways from project PROACTIVE on CBRNe risks and threats

CBRNe – a niche

Railway premises and rolling stock are acknowledged as soft targets for terrorism. The use of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosive (CBRNe) materials to carry out terrorist attacks is a serious threat to railway stakeholders, and the industry is no stranger to this type of incident. Despite these facts, very few guidance documents on this topic exist for public transport.

Railways responsibility?

While railways do not have the same mandate in crises as first responders do, if an incident occurs in a public transport setting, the rail and metro operators would be the first point of contact for victims.

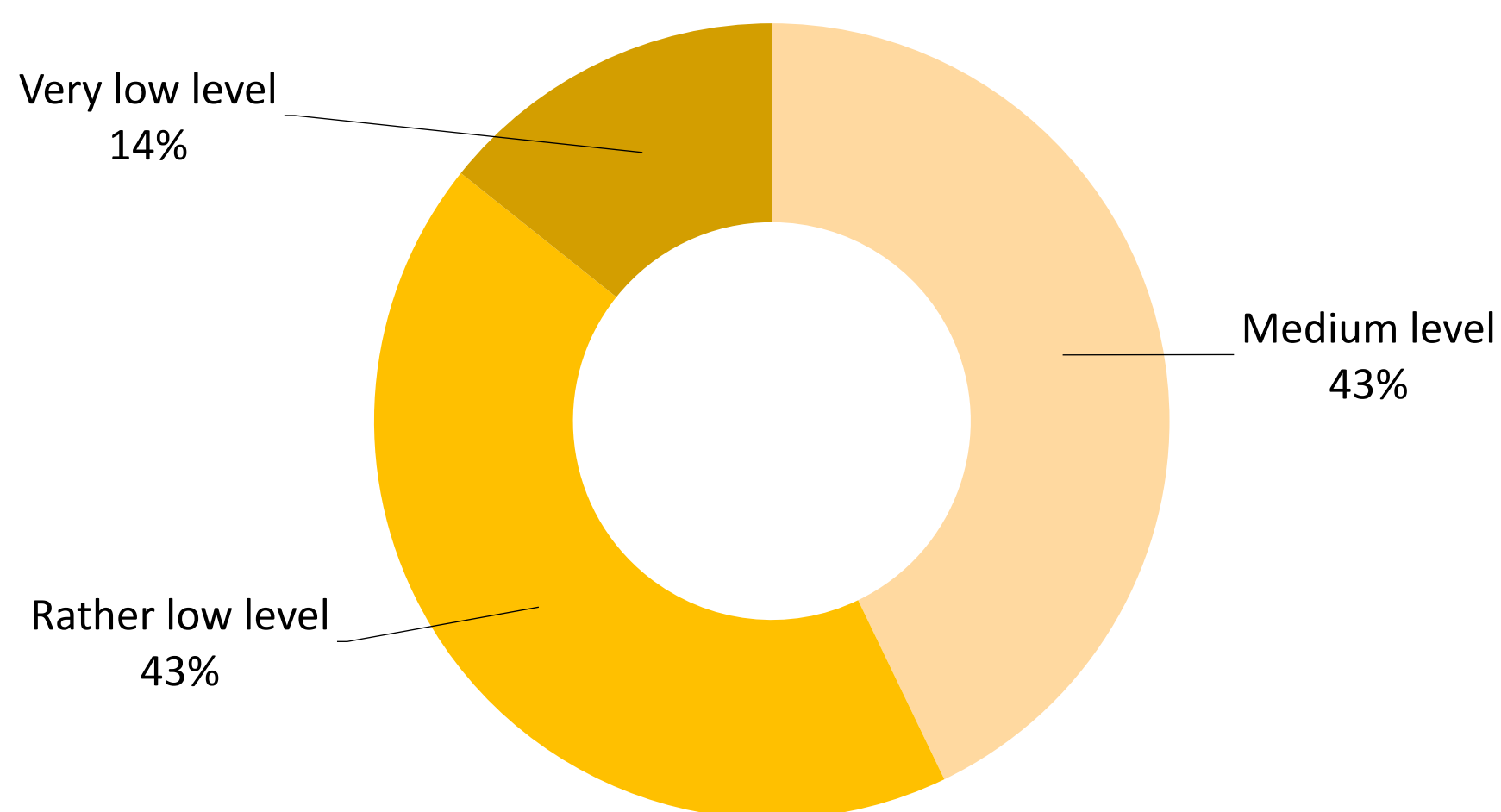
Method

Rail and metro expert responses to three methods of data collection: questionnaire, workshop with an online poll and interviews.

Ready for a threat?

Organisation's CBRNe preparedness

Respondents do not assess the preparedness level to CBRNe incidents of their organisation as high:



Only **2** respondents confirmed that their organisation has CBRNe specific SOPs

Most railway organisations provide staff with information materials

Public communication strategies are not seen as well adapted for CBRNe

“ They [police agencies, railways, transit agencies] all have very similar protocols, they coordinate and they try to make sure that they are in-sync.

-Interview from Canada

Therefore, close cooperation between railways and specialized first responders is seen as best practice.

What about vulnerable groups?

Standard Operating Procedures are useful during incidents and exercises but don't include enough information on vulnerable groups nor the information needed to communicate and manage the public.

“ CBRNe crisis communication with the public and the inclusion of vulnerable groups are major gaps and require improvement.

Railway experts would like to have more information on how to handle such people during an incident.

PROACTIVE recommendations, applicable to the rail sector?

The PROACTIVE project has already developed two sets of recommendations for CBRNe preparedness and response:

- 1) How to close the gap between current practice and the challenges related to such incidents
- 2) How to adapt SOPs.

The PROACTIVE recommendations regarding crisis communication and the inclusion of vulnerable groups are applicable to the public transport sector, while recommendations regarding inter-agency collaboration appear to already be put in place.



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