

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2171**  
**ANSWERED ON 09.08.2024**

**VACANCIES IN RAILWAYS**

2171. MS. SUSHMITA DEV:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware of the fact that due to a shortage of staff, loco pilots are required to have long working hours, if so, details thereof; and
- (b) the total number of filled and sanctioned vacancies in railways in different departments, category-wise, zone-wise?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF RAILWAYS, INFORMATION & BROADCASTING AND  
ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW)

(a) & (b): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

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**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) AND (b) OF UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2171 BY MS. SUSHMITA DEV ANSWERED IN RAJYA SABHA ON 09.08.2024 REGARDING VACANCIES IN RAILWAYS**

(a) & (b): Occurrence and filling up of vacancies are continuous process on Indian Railways considering its size, spatial distribution and criticality of operation. Adequate and suitable manpower is provided to cater to the regular operations, changes in technology, mechanizations and innovative practices. The vacancies are filled up primarily by placement of indents by Railways with Recruitment agencies as per operational and technological requirements.

After easing of restrictions imposed on account of COVID 19, two major examinations involving more than 2.37 crore candidates have been conducted successfully.

Computer Based Test (CBT) exam for more than 1.26 crore candidates was conducted in 7 phases from 28.12.2020 to 31.07.2021 in 133 shifts in 68 days across 211 cities and 726 centres.

Similarly, CBT was conducted for more than 1.1 crore candidates in 5 phases from 17.08.2022 to 11.10.2022 in 99 shifts in 33 days across 191 cities and 551 centres.

Based on these exams, 1,30,581 candidates have been recruited in railways.

The RRB examinations are quite technical in nature entailing large scale mobilization of men and resources and training of manpower. Railway overcame all these challenges and successfully conducted the recruitment in a transparent manner following all laid down guidelines. No instance of paper leakage or similar malpractice has occurred during the entire process.

Recruitment done in Indian Railways during 2004-2014 vis-à-vis during 2014 – 2024 is given as under.

<b>Period</b>	<b>Recruitments</b>
2004-14	4.11 lakh
2014-24	5.02 lakh

Further, as system improvement, the Ministry of Railways has introduced a system of publishing annual calendar this year for recruitment to various categories of Group 'C' posts. Accordingly, five Centralized Employment Notifications (CENs) for 40,554 vacancies have been notified during January to July 2024 for filling up of posts of Assistant Loco Pilots, Technicians, Sub-Inspectors & Constables in Railway Protection Force (RPF), Junior Engineers, Depot Material Superintendents and Chemical and Metallurgical Supervisors. The introduction of annual calendar will benefit the aspirants in the following manner:

- More opportunities for candidates;
- Opportunities to those becoming eligible every year;
- Certainty of exams;
- Faster Recruitment process, Training and Appointments

1. Loco Pilots are important members of Indian Railway family who play pivotal role for moving passenger and goods traffic in safe and efficient manner. Indian Railways is committed to ensure proper working conditions for loco pilots.

2. Loco Pilots are classified under Continuous Category. Section 132 (2) of Railway Act, 1989, prescribes duty hours of 54 hrs on an average in a two-weekly period of fourteen days for staff working under Continuous category.

Rule 8 of "Hours of Work and Period of Rest" (HOER), 2005 lays down the guidelines of duty hours of 52 Hrs on an average in a two-weekly period of fourteen days per week for Loco Pilots i.e., duty hours are less than max. hrs of 54 for other "Continuous" category employees on Indian Railways. Loco Pilots are also compensated for extra working hours as per the rates specified in Section 132 of the Railway Act, 1989.

3. Loco Pilots are given Head Quarter rest, Out Station Rest and Periodic Rest as under :

#### **Head Quarter Rest**

HQ rest of 16 hours is given after a running staff member reaches their HQ, and periodic rest of 30 hours or 22 hours (*as and when due*) is provided as per Rule 133 of the Railway Act, 1989. Since periodic rest is also an HQ rest, the requirement for 16 hrs HQ rest is fulfilled during periodic rest.

## **Out Station Rest**

Out station rest is also given when a driver completes his outward journey and it is as under:

<b>Duty Hrs</b>	<b>Rest</b>
For duty less than 5 hours	Equivalent to the hours of duty performed + 1 hours
For duty 5- 8 Hrs	6 Hours
For Duty 8 Hours or more	8 Hours

## **Periodic Rest**

Sections 133 of Railway Act, 1989 and Rule 12 of HOER,2005 lays down the guidelines for Periodical rest of Running staff. These stipulates that running staff be granted, each month, a rest of at least five periods of not less than twenty-two consecutive hours each, or a rest of at least four periods of not less than thirty consecutive hours each including a full night.

4. Based on High Power Committee recommendations, duty hours of Loco Pilots were reduced in 2016. As per these recommendations, Sign On to Sign Off duty of 10 Hrs was reduced to 9 Hrs and also 10+2 Hrs of duties were reduced to 9+2 hours.
5. The running hours of Loco Pilots are meticulously monitored. Except for exigencies, the running hours are maintained.
6. For improvement of working conditions of loco running crew, following measures have been taken in respect of the Running rooms:
  - All 558 running rooms have been air-conditioned.
  - Running staff are also provided with Yoga and meditation room, reading room with newspaper and magazines for relaxing in accordance with their requirements.
  - Loco pilots have to keep a continuous watch on track and signals involving long hours of standing in loco while driving unlike aeroplanes and road vehicles. Therefore, foot massager etc. are made available in running rooms for giving proper rest to loco pilots.

- Provision for subsidized meals in running rooms.
- Availability of RO water filters in running rooms.

7. Further, steps and initiatives taken for improvement of working conditions of loco running crew as under:

- Ergonomic crew friendly design features like better seat and drivers desks for better comfort of loco pilots has been provided. Since 2014, 7,286 three phase locos with these facilities have been manufactured as against only 719 locos prior to 2014.
- All new locos are provided with air-conditioned cabs since 2017-18. So far more than 7,000 locos have been provided with air conditioners.
- Fitment of Vigilance Control Devices (VCD) as a technological aid to alert loco pilots in case of loss of alertness while driving. Since 2014, VCD has been provided in more than 12,000 (10,521 Electric +1,873 Diesel) locos.
- Fitment of GPS based Fog Safe Device (FSD) is being provided to loco pilots as a technical aid for displaying and announcing the name and distance of approaching signals and important landmarks. Since 2014, 21,742 nos. FSDs have been provided in IR.
- Simulator based training for improving the driving skills and the reaction time of Loco Pilots is being emphasized and simulator training facility is increased significantly.
- Mobile Application named 'Chalak Dal' has been developed for the facilitation of crew. The App has been modified in 2023, to enable crew to access all his details related to running duties, sign on / sign off, loco trouble shooting directory and other documents required during train operation which otherwise were required to be carried in hard copy.
- Various safety drives & special counseling programs are regularly organized for checking the alertness and safety awareness among the running staff. Special safety seminars & meetings are also organized for interaction with family members of running staff for educating on role of quality rest in life of running staff.
- Special drives are launched regularly to counsel running staff to boost their morale and confidence.

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