

Railroads: Moving America Safely

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN RAILROADS

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Summary

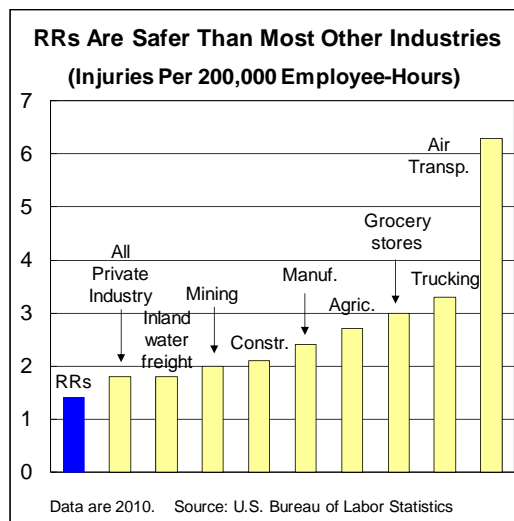
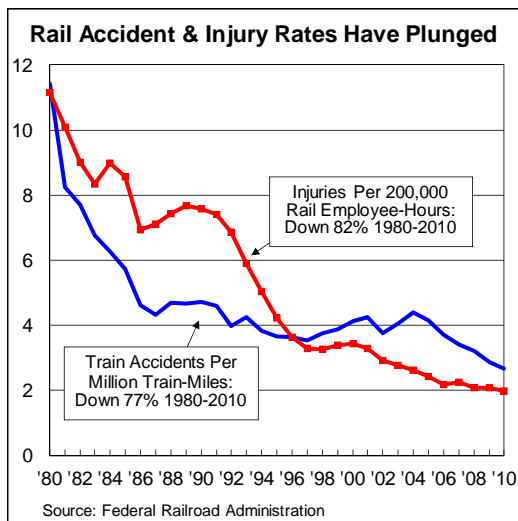
Nothing is more important to railroads than safety, and **America's railroads are safer today than ever before.** The safety challenge is never ending. That's why railroads, in cooperation with their employees, suppliers, customers and policymakers, are constantly developing and implementing new safety-enhancing technologies and operating practices to further improve their already excellent safety record.

America's Railroads: Safer than Ever

For railroads, **pursuing safe operations is not an option, it's an imperative.** Through massive investments in safety-enhancing infrastructure, equipment, and technology; extensive employee training; cooperation with rail labor, suppliers, customers, communities, and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA); and cutting-edge research and development, railroads are at the forefront of advancing safety.

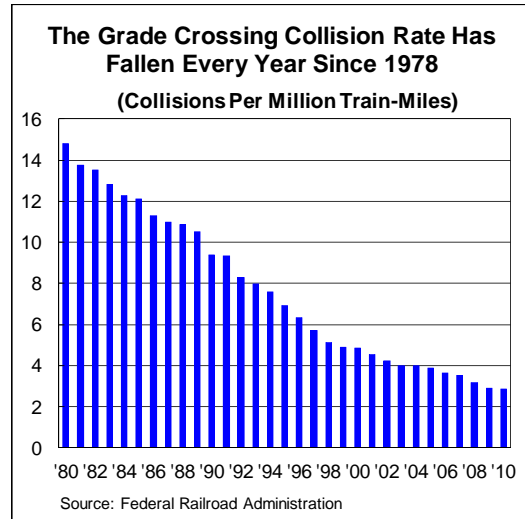
The rail industry's excellent safety record reflects its strong commitment to safety. From 1980 to 2010, the **train accident rate fell 77 percent**, the **rail employee injury rate fell 82 percent**, and the **grade crossing collision rate fell 81 percent.** In fact, **2010 was the safest year ever for U.S. railroads**, breaking the record set in 2009.

Railroads today have lower employee injury rates than most other major industries, including trucking, inland water transportation, airlines, agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and construction — **even lower than grocery stores.**



Raising the Grade on Grade Crossing Safety

Reducing collisions at highway-rail grade crossings is a key rail industry goal. From 1980 through 2010, grade crossing **collisions fell 81 percent**, grade crossing **injuries fell 78 percent**, and grade crossing **fatalities fell 69 percent**. This huge improvement is due in large part to the **closure or grade separation** of thousands of crossings, as well as the federal **Section 130 program**, which allocates more than \$200 million per year to state governments for grade crossing improvements. Railroads themselves spend hundreds of millions of dollars each year on crossing improvements and maintenance.



Intensive education efforts by railroads, working with state and local law enforcement officials and others (especially **Operation Lifesaver**, a nationwide non-profit organization), have improved public awareness about safe behavior around grade crossings and on railroad property. Railroads also work closely with state transportation departments, who decide where to install and upgrade crossing warning devices for the motoring public.

Moving Hazardous Materials Safely

Railroads have a solid record in moving hazardous materials safely. In 2009 (the most recent year available), **99.997 percent** of rail hazmat shipments reached their destination without a release caused by a train accident. Rail hazmat accident rates are **down 90 percent** since 1980.

Unlike trucks or barges, railroads are required by the federal government to transport hazardous materials, whether they want to or not. This requirement comes with significant risk: every time a railroad transports these materials, it faces potential ruinous liability.

To address the huge risk that railroads are forced to assume when they carry highly hazardous traffic, railroads support public policies that encourage the **substitution of less hazardous products and technologies** for highly hazardous materials whenever possible.

New Technologies Enhance Rail Safety

Railroads are constantly incorporating **new technologies** to improve rail safety. Examples include **sophisticated detectors** along tracks that identify defects on passing rail cars; **ground-penetrating radar** that identifies problems below ground, such as excessive moisture, that could destabilize the track; and **specialized rail cars** that use sophisticated instruments to identify defects in tracks. In recent years, railroads have been investing more than ever before in their systems. There is a clear relationship between rail reinvestments and rail safety improvements.

