From the chlorine used to purify drinking water to the chemicals used in fertilizers, railroads provide a safe solution for moving the hazardous materials (hazmat) essential to daily life. Today, more than 99.999% of all hazmat moved by rail reaches its destination without a release caused by an incident, making rail a responsible choice when compared with other modes, like trucks.

Railroads recognize the responsibility that comes with moving hazmat and strive each day to safely and securely deliver the freight entrusted to them. Working with customers, suppliers, communities and federal regulators — like the U.S. Department of Homeland Security — railroads’ approach to hazmat safety is both exacting and all-encompassing.

These efforts range from rigorous design standards for rail cars carrying hazmat and specialized mobile applications to provide greater transparency for first responders to a software system jointly developed by the industry and the U.S. Federal Railroad Administration to evaluate and determine the safest, most secure rail routes on which to move the materials.

These efforts — coupled with the rail industry’s ongoing commitment to infrastructure investment, technology deployment, rigorous employee training, improved operating practices and community safety efforts — have lowered hazmat accident rates by 41% since 2008.

- **AskRail Mobile App**: The AskRail app, available to qualified emergency responders, ensures communities have the information they need to quickly and effectively respond in the event of a rail incident.

- **Community Outreach**: Railroads proactively partner with communities across their network and thousands of emergency first responders each year to ensure they have the tools, training and information needed to quickly, safely and effectively respond in the event of a rail incident.

- **Crude Oil by Rail Safety**: Rail industry efforts to create tougher tank car standards, ongoing rigorous employee training and community-safety efforts all help ensure the safe transport of crude oil by rail (CBR).

- **Common Carrier Obligation**: The federal government requires railroads to carry hazmat under a “common carrier” obligation. The FRA and PHMSA oversee various aspects of railroad operations including train speed, inspections, procedures for how to handle and secure trains carrying hazmat and much more.