

Freight Rail Hazmat Safety: More than 99.999% of all Tank Cars Reach their Destination Safely

From the chlorine used to purify drinking water to the crude oil that brings the U. S. closer to energy independence, America's freight railroads transport some of the most essential hazardous materials (hazmat). Today, more than 99.999% of all hazmat moved by rail reaches its destination without a release caused by an incident.

Because hazmat safety is a joint responsibility, freight railroads work with hazmat shippers, railroad suppliers and government partners to develop specialized initiatives, regulations and standards to help ensure these important goods are transported safely and securely. All told, these initiatives — coupled with the rail industry's ongoing commitment to infrastructure investment, technology innovation, rigorous employee training, self-imposed operating practices and community safety efforts — have lowered hazmat accident rates by 66% since 2000.

At a Glance

- **Investment = Increased Safety**

Freight railroads have spent more than \$660 billion since 1981 to maintain and modernize the nation's rail network, which has increased safety.

- **Tougher Railcar Standards**

Rail industry efforts have ensured that today's tank cars are built with higher grade steel, better thermal protection, improved valves and fittings and thicker tanks.

- **Stringent Federal Regulations**

The Federal Railroad Administration and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration oversee various aspects of railroad operations including train speed, inspections, procedures for how to handle and secure trains carrying hazmat and much more.

- **Specialized Hazmat Operating Procedures**

Railroads have adopted special operating practices for hazmat transport that often exceed regulatory requirements to help ensure these sensitive commodities are shipped safely and securely.

- **First Responder Training and Emergency Response**

Freight railroads help train tens of thousands of emergency responders each year with programs and outreach efforts.

- **Community Planning**

Railroads collaborate with first responders and other authorities and partners to swiftly and effectively carry out their emergency response plans.

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