

Keeping Pedestrians and Drivers Safe around Railroad Tracks

Pedestrian and driver safety around railroad tracks and driver behavior at grade crossings — where rail tracks and roads intersect — are a top safety concern for freight railroads. With more than 200,000 grade crossings in the U.S., railroads work daily with state, local and federal officials and the public to help prevent accidents and injuries on the tracks.

States, not railroads, are responsible for evaluating grade crossing risks and prioritizing grade crossings for improvement. The state highway authority decides to install warning devices at public grade crossings —not railroads. The Federal Highway Administration approves this decision.

However, railroads invest heavily in grade crossing safety, spending hundreds of millions of dollars each year to inspect and maintain crossing warning devices and many millions more on programs and initiatives related to grade crossing safety. With a nearly 140,000-mile network that runs through towns and cities of all sizes, railroads also work closely with local communities to eliminate risky behavior near railroad tracks.

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.

- **Railroad Investments**

America's freight railroads spend hundreds of millions of dollars each year to maintain and improve grade crossings.

- **Safety Improvements**

Between 1980 and 2016, grade crossing collisions were down 81%; injuries were down 78%; fatalities were down 69%. The grade crossing collision rate has fallen nearly every year since 1980; from 1980 through 2016, it fell 80%.

- **See Tracks? Think Train!**

Freight railroads partnered with Operation Lifesaver, the Federal Railroad Administration and the Federal Transit Administration to launch a nationwide public education campaign that helps raise awareness about risky pedestrian and driver behavior around railroad tracks.

- **Preventable Deaths**

Approximately 95% of all rail-related deaths involve drivers at grade crossings, or people trespassing on railroad tracks.

- **Section 130 Program**

The federal government invests in grade crossing safety. The federal "Section 130" program in the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) provides funds to states — more than \$230 million each year — to install lights and gates at grade crossings or to create grade separations.