

Freight Rail Safety Record

Railroads' annual investments to modernize and improve America's freight rail network have significantly contributed to freight rail's strong safety record. In fact, there is a direct correlation between the increase in rail network investments and enhanced safety performance.

With record levels of private spending on capital improvements and maintenance over the last five years and more than \$660 billion spent since 1980, America's privately owned freight railroads are at the forefront of advancing safety.

U.S. railroads had the lowest train accident rate on record in 2017, according to data from the Federal Railroad Administration. Derailment rates, which declined 9% in 2016 from 2015, as well as track-caused accident rates, are also both all-time lows. The 2017 rail safety statistics continue a string of record-setting years, showing this period has been the safest ever for the rail sector. According to December 2017 FRA data based on per million train miles, since 2000 the:

- Train accident rate is down 44%.
- Equipment-caused accident rate is down 38%.
- Track-caused accident rate is down 55% to an all-time low.
- Derailment rate is down 42%.

At a Glance

- **Highway Trust Fund**
The current Highway Trust Fund does not cover the costs to sustain and repair the nation's deteriorating bridges and roads, leaving taxpayers to pay billions each year in subsidies to highway users.
- **One of America's Safest Industries**
America's railroads have lower employee injury rates than most other major industries, including trucking, airlines, agriculture, mining, manufacturing and construction — even lower than food stores.
- **Tech Investments**
To identify problems before they occur, railroads are investing in new technologies — from track-side detectors to ultrasound, big data and drones.
- **World-Class Testing Facility**
Many railroad safety advancements are developed at the Transportation Technology Center, Inc. (TTCI) in Pueblo, Colorado, a subsidiary of the AAR that's widely considered the best rail research facility in the world.
- **Stellar Hazmat Safety**
In 2016, more than 99.999% of rail hazmat shipments reached their destination without a release caused by an incident. Rail hazardous material accident rates in 2016 were down approximately 66% from 2000.
- **Government Oversight**
The FRA oversees virtually every aspect of rail operations. Railroads also partner with the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration and the Department of Homeland Security to help ensure a safe network.