

Railroad Jobs: A Highly Skilled & Compensated Workforce

Freight rail employees are highly skilled professionals who are among the best-compensated workers in the nation.

The industry attracts employees from a wide range of backgrounds —from high school graduates to those holding graduate degrees — to help safely transport the raw materials, products and finished goods that sustain the nation's economy and people.

Railroads provide the opportunity to build lifelong careers in fields such as engineering and dispatching, in law enforcement, information technology and industrial development. And with a strong track record of hiring America's veterans, rail companies are military-friendly employers. Because of high wages and benefits, technical training and professional growth opportunities, freight rail employees often stay in the industry for their entire careers. Many have family railroad legacies that stretch back generations.

- **A Well-compensated, Nationwide Workforce:** Freight railroads have approximately 160,000 employees. Class I freight rail employee compensation, including benefits, averages approximately \$130,200 per year.
- **Technologically Advanced:** Cutting-edge technology such as ultrasound and drones empowers employees to do their jobs with greater efficiency, accuracy and objectivity while helping keep them — and the entire network — safe.
- **A Safe Industry, Getting Safer:** Today freight rail is one of the safest industries in the U.S., with employee injury rates lower than those of other modes of transportation such as trucking and airlines; other major industries such as agriculture, mining, manufacturing and construction; and even grocery stores.
- **Military-friendly:** Nearly 20% of current employees are veterans, and railroads aim to hire many new employees with military backgrounds.
- **Excellent Retirement Benefits:** Railroad retirees are covered by the Railroad Retirement System instead of Social Security. Today, over 650,000 beneficiaries receive more than \$12 billion in benefits from Railroad Retirement annually.
- **Union Representation:** Approximately 84% of Class I rail employees are unionized, rail employees are represented by one or more of a dozen different labor unions. The Railway Labor Act governs collective bargaining between freight railroads and their employees.