

Railroads: Moving America Safely

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN RAILROADS

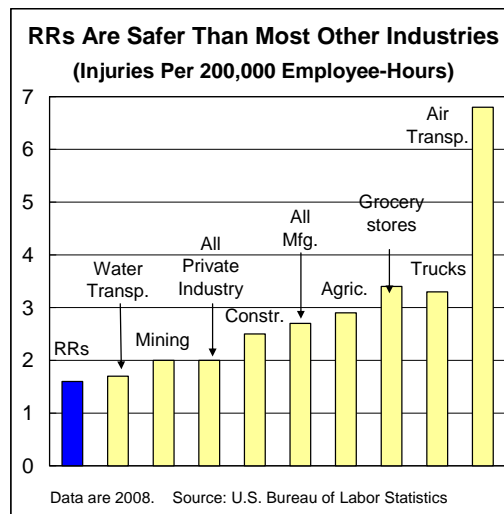
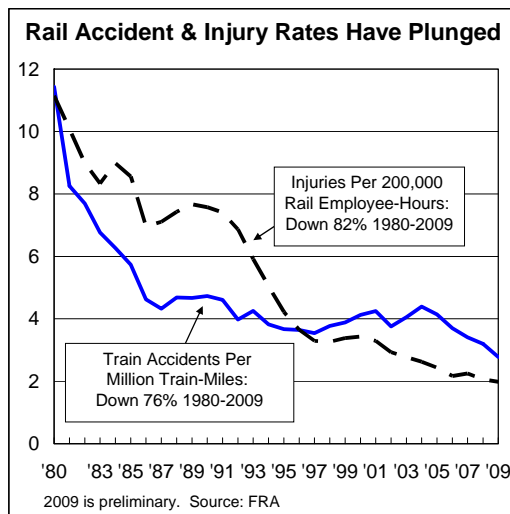
FEBRUARY 2010

Summary

Nothing is more important to railroads than safety, and today America's railroads are **safer than ever before**. The safety challenge is never ending. That's why railroads, in cooperation with employees, suppliers, customers and policymakers, are constantly developing and implementing new safety-enhancing technologies and operating practices in order to further improve their already stellar safety record.

America's Railroads: Safer than Ever

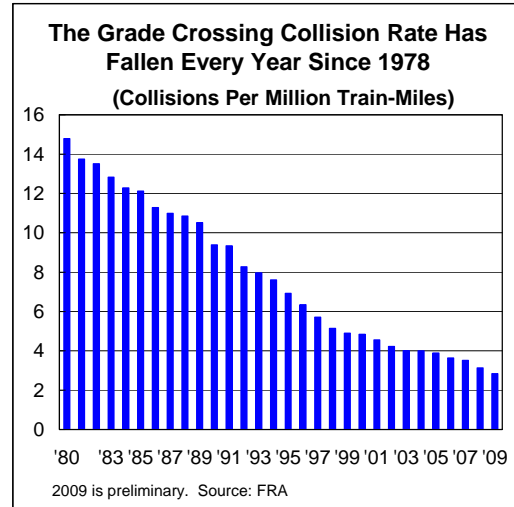
- **2009 was the safest year ever** for U.S. railroads, breaking the safety record set in 2008. Preliminary data indicate that from 1980 to 2009, the train accident rate fell 76 percent, the rail employee injury rate fell 82 percent, and the grade crossing collision rate fell 81 percent — setting new record lows.
- Railroads have lower employee injury rates than most other major industries, including trucks, water transportation, airlines, agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and construction — **even lower than grocery stores**.



Raising the Grade on Grade Crossing Safety

- From 1980 through 2009, the number of grade crossing collisions fell 82 percent, grade crossing injuries fell 82 percent, and grade crossing fatalities fell 70 percent — even though highway and train traffic are both much higher today than they were in 1980.

- The significant decline in grade crossing collisions is due in large part to the closure or grade separation of thousands of crossings, as well as the federal highway Section 130 program, which distributes \$220 million per year to state governments for grade crossing improvements. In addition, railroads spend more than \$250 million each year maintaining grade crossings, plus millions more on educational programs.



- Intensive education efforts by railroads, working with state and local law enforcement officials and others (especially Operation Lifesaver, a nationwide non-profit), have improved public awareness about safe behavior around grade crossings and the dangers of trespassing on railroad property. In addition, railroads work closely with state agencies responsible for deciding where to install and upgrade grade crossing warning devices.

The Safe Movement of Hazardous Materials

- Freight railroads have a solid record in moving hazardous materials safely. **More than 99.99 percent** of rail hazmat shipments reach their destination without release caused by a train accident. Rail hazmat accident rates are **down 91 percent** since 1980.
- Railroads have a “common carrier” obligation to carry hazardous materials. That means that, **unlike all other modes of transportation**, railroads are **required** by the federal government to transport these materials, whether railroads want to or not. This requirement to carry highly hazardous materials comes with significant risk: every time a railroad does so, it faces potentially ruinous liability.
- To address the risk and liability that railroads are forced to assume when they carry highly hazardous traffic, railroads support public policies that encourage chemical producers and users to **substitute less hazardous products and technologies** for highly hazardous materials whenever possible.

New Technologies Enhance Rail Safety

- Railroads are constantly incorporating **new technologies** to improve rail safety. Many of these technological advances are designed to help protect freight cars, locomotives, track, and cargo **before** damage, costly repairs, traffic holdups, and derailments occur.
- A few examples: **sophisticated trackside detectors** identify defects on passing rail cars before structural failure occurs; **ground-penetrating radar** identify problems below ground, such as excessive water penetration that could cause instability; **specialized rail cars** use sophisticated instruments to identify defects in tracks; and **improved metallurgy** and **improved fastening systems** enhance track stability, reducing the risk of track failure leading to derailments.