



Federal Railroad Administration Railroad Trespassing Fact Sheet

The FRA, in partnership with rail safety advocates in the railroad industry and at state and local governments, is dedicated to answering rising rail transportation demands with an equally powerful commitment using education to keep people safe around railroad-rights-of-way.

- ✓ **In 2011, more than 412 people died in the United States as a result of railroad trespassing.**
- ✓ **On average, two people are killed or injured trespassing on railroad property every day in the United States.**
- ✓ **The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) works with railroads, rail labor, state transportation departments, local communities and schools to educate the public about the dangers of railroad trespassing.**

What is Trespassing?

Trespassing on private railroad property is illegal. In most States, trespassing is codified as a property crime and a general offense. Here are some facts to consider.

- Trespassing along railroad rights-of-way is the leading cause of rail-related deaths in America.
- Nationally, more than 400 trespass fatalities and nearly as many injuries occur each year along railroad rights-of-way, the vast majority of which are preventable.
- The railroad-operating environment is an inherently hazardous one for the general public. Railroad employees have the benefit of extensive safety training, as such; the general public should always stay away from railroad right-of-ways.
- Trespassers frequently sustain life-threatening injuries by failing to use designated locations such as highway-rail grade crossings or dedicated pedestrian access paths.
- A list of State-by-State rail trespassing laws is available in [*FRA's Compilation of State Laws and Regulations Affecting Highway-Rail Crossings.*](#)

Role of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)

To highlight our commitment, FRA has formed a Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety and Trespass Prevention Team to reduce the prevalence, popular indifference, and social acceptability of trespassing by carrying out wide-ranging efforts, primarily focusing on public education.

- FRA issues guidance to aid railroads and communities in adopting specific trespass countermeasures and mitigation strategies, including a [*Community Trespassing Prevention Guide.*](#)
- FRA works in partnership with the rail industry, State and local governments, and other transportation and public safety organizations to raise public awareness about the inherent dangers and consequences of trespassing, through presentations and dialogues at schools, workplaces, and community and civic groups across the country.

- FRA also maintains a [database](#) of trespass fatalities and injuries, compiled from reports submitted by railroads as required under Federal law.
- In order to better understand trespass behavior, FRA issued a report in March 2008 ([Rail-Trespasser Fatalities: Developing Demographic Profiles](#)) based upon an analysis of three years of reported rail trespasser fatalities. More recently in 2008 and 2012, FRA sponsored two [Right Of Way Fatality and Trespass Prevention Workshops](#).

Role of Railroads and Local Law Enforcement

Railroads and local law enforcement agencies are taking action to prevent railroad trespassing.

- Railroads and local law enforcement also conduct targeted educational outreach programs, often in conjunction with [Operation Lifesaver, Inc. \(OLI\)](#).
- Railroads dispatch security personnel and coordinate patrols with local law enforcement agencies to cite and/or arrest violators in areas frequented by trespassers.
- Law enforcement agencies and judicial officials, in particular, are critical towards the success of these efforts, since effective policing of railroad rights-of-way and the issuance of citations or tickets can significantly deter would-be or repeat violators.
- Railroads also develop specific trespass countermeasures with local communities when possible.

For more information contact:

FRA Office of Public Affairs

(202) 493-6024

www.fra.dot.gov

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