2018 Rail Statistics Report
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Dear Fellow Ohioans:

Ohio is a major crossroads for the railroad industry. With approximately 5,000 miles of track and 5,700 public grade crossings and 36 freight railroads operating within our state, Ohio has the fifth highest rail traffic in the country.

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO), in conjunction with the Ohio Rail Development Commission, is responsible for ensuring the safety of motorists at public grade crossings in Ohio. PUCO rail inspectors inspect the warning devices that are essential for motorist safety. The PUCO also approves funding for enhancing safety at public grade crossings.

This year, the PUCO is excited to announce the introduction of a redesigned Ohio Railroad Information System (ORIS) website. The public now has access to detailed, real-time data on grade crossing accidents and blocked rail crossings. This data can be filtered by location, date, severity, and much more. The ORIS website is available at: https://GradeCrossings.PUCO.ohio.gov

With the addition of the ORIS website, the 2018 Rail Statistics report will now focus on statewide trends. County-specific information will always be available and current on the Rail Commission site. If you have any questions about this report or ORIS, feel free to contact us at:

Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
Rail Division
180 E. Broad Street – 4th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215-3793
(614) 466-1150

Sincerely,

Randall Schumacher
Chief of Motor Carrier & Rail Enforcement Division
What can I do with the new ORIS?

The newly redesigned Ohio Railroad Information System website can now display current data about grade crossing accidents and blocked crossings.

Learn more about where 2018 crashes occurred:

Interactive map and charts

Learn more about 2018 crossing improvements:

Project locations

Learn more about blocked crossings in your area:

Blocked crossing dashboard
Overseeing Ohio Railroad Safety

The PUCO works to ensure safety of over 5,700 public railroad crossings and works with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to assist in providing oversight of approximately 5,000 miles of railroad track. PUCO rail staff works to accomplish this goal through inspections, safety upgrades and funding programs.

Federal Railroad Administration State Inspector Program
The FRA State Inspector Program is administered by the FRA (U.S. Department of Transportation) which trains qualified PUCO rail inspectors in one of five disciplines: track; signals and train control; hazardous materials; operating practices; and motive power and equipment (mechanical). After completing the sometimes multi-year apprenticeship process, the federally-certified inspectors conduct inspections throughout the state. They enforce 49 CFR 200–299 (freight rail regulations) as well as 49 CFR 171–180 (hazardous materials). These inspections involve hazardous materials by rail; physical track inspections; mechanical inspections of locomotives and train cars; inspections of the grade crossing warning devices, as well the signals systems used to communicate with the trains; and inspections of the practices and procedures of the railroads. PUCO FRA-certified inspectors work closely with federal inspectors to improve the safety of Ohio’s railroads.

Railroad Inspections
PUCO rail inspectors monitor grade crossings, inspect railroad tracks and equipment, and investigate all grade crossing incidents. These inspectors work across Ohio responding to the concerns of the public such as complaints of rough crossings, excessive noise and overgrown weeds and vegetation that can obstruct sight at railroad crossings. Safety at railroad crossings has improved greatly in recent years as a result of these inspections.

Safety Upgrades
The installation of warning devices such as flashing lights and roadway gates is one way safety can be improved at rail crossings. Over the past 15 years, the PUCO has approved 3,300 safety upgrades at crossings throughout the state, with 54 upgrades approved in 2018. In addition, many other safety and engineering enhancements have been implemented at Ohio rail crossings.

Ohioans wishing to find more information about grade crossings and recent project upgrades in their community can visit the railroad section of www.puco.ohio.gov.
Safety Improvement Funding Opportunities

Federal and state funding resources are available to local communities to implement safety upgrades and install lights and gates at grade crossings.

**Federal funding:** The PUCO, in conjunction with the Ohio Rail Development Commission, works to select Ohio grade crossings for federally-funded safety upgrades. Crossings for these upgrades are chosen based on a priority list that ranks the crossings in order of risk of accident. Criteria to determine the risk of accident include the number of tracks, average daily traffic, crash history, number of highway lanes, train speed and the number of trains per day. These projects are paid 100 percent through federal funds, and the PUCO monitors the projects to ensure they are completed.

**State Grade Crossing Upgrade Program:** For crossings not eligible for federal funding, the state-funded Grade Crossing Upgrade Program allows local communities to share the cost of installing safety devices with the state and the local railroad. Communities who utilize this program may be required to pay between 25 and 65 percent of the cost of the project. The PUCO allocates funds for this program based on an objective formula measuring the need for safety upgrades at the crossing and other special conditions that may be applicable. Communities wishing to apply for state funding must submit an application to the PUCO for consideration. A PUCO inspector evaluates the crossing site to determine the appropriate level of funding assistance. Construction of the upgrades begins after a financial assistance proposal is approved by the local highway authority and the local railroad.
Supplemental Assistance Program: A supplemental assistance program is administered by the PUCO to help communities install safety enhancements at crossings in addition to crossbuck signage or lights and gates. Through this program, the PUCO provides up to $5,000 for physical improvements around the crossing, including rumble strips, illumination, improved signage or vegetation removal.

To apply for supplemental assistance, the local highway authority must submit an application to the PUCO for approval. If approved, a contract will be prepared for the local highway authority and the PUCO to sign. When construction of the project is completed and approved, the local highway authority can then submit the cost for reimbursement of up to $5,000.

Consolidation Program: In 1991 the Federal Railroad Administration set a goal to close 25 percent of highway-grade crossings in the United States, and the PUCO is committed to working toward this goal. The consolidation program works to eliminate unnecessary crossings in exchange for implementing safety improvements at other crossings along the same rail corridor. These improvements, such as lights, gates, signage and illumination are paid for through federal, state and railroad funds. When a local community agrees to permanently close a grade crossing to vehicle traffic the state works to provide funding for the agreed-upon upgrades.

Communities wishing to participate in the consolidation program should have the local highway authority contact the PUCO. A team surveys the site, evaluates the project and negotiates the levels of participation of the local highway authority and the railroad. Typically, local authorities hold public hearings before deciding to close a public crossing. The PUCO adopts a signed agreement by all parties before construction begins, and the Commission approves the program and issues project deadlines.
The Ohio Rail Hotline

The Ohio Rail Hotline at (866) 814-RAIL is a toll-free number administered by the PUCO, the Ohio Rail Development Commission and the Ohio Department of Transportation. This hotline provides information and answers to questions about railroad crossings in Ohio, including:

- Specific railroad crossings, such as location and type of warning devices
- Funding for railroad crossing safety devices and other crossing improvements
- Railroad operation in Ohio
- Railroad development opportunities
- Rail corridor improvements or public grade crossing closures

Please visit www.ohiorail.ohio.gov for more information about Ohio railroads.

Questions or concerns?

For more information about the PUCO’s role in Ohio railroad programs, contact the PUCO Rail Division at (614) 466-1150 or visit the railroad section of www.PUCO.ohio.gov.

To report railroad emergencies, grade crossing crashes and other incidents, please contact the appropriate local railroad:

- CSX
  (800) 232-0144
  www.csx.com
- G&W Companies (Ohio Central Systems, Columbus & Ohio River Railroad, Ohio Central Railroad, Warren Trumbull Railroad, Ohio Southern Railroad)
  (800) 733-0026
  www.gwrr.com
- G&W Companies (Indiana & Ohio Railway, Chicago Ft. Wayne & Eastern, Central Railroad of Indiana)
  (800) 979-4958
  www.gwrr.com
- Norfolk Southern
  (800) 453-2530
  www.nscorp.com
- R.J. Corman Railroads
  (800) 772-9091
  www.rjcorman.com
- Wheeling & Lake Erie
  (877) 767-7203
  www.wlerwy.com
Ohio Rail Crossing Statistics 2018
In 2018, the PUCO continued its important mission of monitoring rail transportation in Ohio. Improving safety is a vital part of this mission. A total of 54 federal, state and locally-funded safety upgrades were ordered during the year including the installation of lights and gates, supplemental assistance upgrades, circuitry upgrades and closings.

The PUCO’s staff of federally certified inspectors conducted 543 FRA railroad inspections in 2018. All 5,708 public grade crossings in Ohio were inspected for safety.

The PUCO is proud of the success in Ohio rail safety. The number of train-vehicle crashes at Ohio public highway-rail grade crossings has decreased significantly, from 123 in 2001 to 68 in 2016 to 66 in 2018.

While the PUCO believes that active warning devices play an important role in rail crossing safety, there is much work to be done to educate motorists on how to safely travel across railroad crossings. Many of these crashes occurred because of motorist actions including failure to stop, driving around the gates or stopping/stalling on the tracks.
2018 Statistics at a Glance

593 federal inspections by PUCO inspectors
5,708 state grade crossings inspected
235 rail complaints resolved
54 counties with no crashes

66 total crashes
14 injury crashes
15 injuries
8 fatal crashes
8 fatalities
2018 Analysis

Total Railroad Crashes 2012 - 2018

Total Railroad Crash Fatalities 2012 - 2018

Crashes by railroad company

Norfolk Southern Railway: 28
CSX Transportation: 27
Other: 7
Wheeling & Lake Erie Railroad: 3
Indiana & Ohio Railroad: 1
When crashes occurred

Crashes by month

Crashes by time

Crashes by weather condition

- Clear: 68%
- Rain: 9%
- Snow: 6%
- Cloudy: 17%
Why crashes occurred

Circumstances of crash

- Train hit highway user: 68%
- Highway user hit train: 32%

Motorists’ actions before crash

- 28% stopped on crossing
- 26% did not stop
- 20% went around the gates
- 14% stopped, then proceeded

Railroad crashes by warning device

- Gates: 46
- Crossbucks: 17
- Flashing lights: 3

Speed of train in crash

- 50–59 mph: 11%
- 40–49 mph: 14%
- 30–39 mph: 11%
- 20–29 mph: 19%
- 10–19 mph: 15%
- 0–9 mph: 30%
- 0 mph: 28%
Who was involved

Crashes by motorist age

- Male: 56%
- Female: 24%
- Unreported: 20%

Crashes by vehicle type

- Car: 59%
- Pickup truck: 18%
- Truck: 8%
- Truck-trailer: 8%
- Pedestrian: 9%
- Van: 1%
- Other: 2%

Crashes by gender

- Male: 56%
- Female: 24%
- Unreported: 20%
# Railroad Crash Statistics

## 2018 Crashes by County

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Fatalities</th>
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<td><strong>8</strong></td>
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Railroad crash statistics

Crashes from 1991 - 2018

--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
Total Crashes | 325 | 264 | 254 | 216 | 217 | 176 | 172 | 137 | 127 | 143 | 123 | 127 | 112 | 117 |
Fatal Crashes | 41 | 38 | 38 | 31 | 25 | 12 | 20 | 14 | 16 | 14 | 14 | 12 | 10 | 11 |
Number of Fatalities | 53 | 45 | 42 | 38 | 32 | 13 | 27 | 14 | 19 | 15 | 23 | 20 | 11 | 13 |

--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
Total Crashes | 122 | 108 | 113 | 82 | 55 | 65 | 63 | 71 | 61 | 76 | 72 | 64 | 68 | 66 |
Fatal Crashes | 7 | 14 | 8 | 11 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 6 | 8 | 8 |
Number of Fatalities | 7 | 16 | 8 | 12 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 10 | 8 | 4 | 9 | 6 | 8 | 8 |

1991 - 2018
Total Crashes 3596
Fatal Crashes 407
Number of Fatalities 476
2018 Railroad Crash Locations

Crash Type
- Red: Fatal Crash
- Orange: Injury Crash
- Green: Other Crash

 ohio Public Utilities Commission
# PUCO-ordered improvements

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<th>Year</th>
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2018
Grade Crossing Improvements

Project Type
- Lights and Gates
- Upgrades
- Closure
- Other