Grade Crossing Safety Updates

AASHTO SCORT National Meeting
Jamie Rennert
Acting Director, Office of Program Delivery
February 18, 2016
Agenda

1. Purpose and Need

2. Recent Accomplishments

3. Current Projects

4. Future Initiatives/Funding
GX Accidents in Decline...

In the past ten years, fatalities at U.S. crossings have declined substantially and we’ve seen some of the best railroad safety years on record.

But 2014 saw Fatalities Increase...

There were 264* fatalities at highway-rail crossings. That is roughly equivalent to the passenger load of a large aircraft.

....And Several High Profile Accidents

Recent, high-profile collisions at highway-rail grade crossings have highlighted the continued need for all of us to remain vigilant about highway-rail grade crossing safety.

....Any accident is one too many.

The Department of Transportation is dedicated to eliminating fatalities on our nation’s railroads by working Toward Zero Deaths.

*As of February 11th, 2016
Over the past ten years, fatalities at highway-rail grade crossings decreased approximately 24%. While this downward trend is positive, fatalities began to trend upward over the past two years.

*As of February 11th, 2016*
Railroad Crossing Collisions and Fatalities: A 5 Year Map
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Piedmont Improvement Program

Bowers to Lake-Upper Lake Rd Bridge Grade Separation

Grier Road Grade Separation
**Tower 55 Project**

**BEFORE:** Old route to school via Peach Street GX

**AFTER:** New Route to school via Gounah St Underpass
Illinois HSR Project

Four Quadrant Gates

Pedestrian Gates
Grade Crossing Task Force
Reduce incidents, injuries, and fatalities at grade crossings

5 Major Focus Areas

- Data, Analysis, and Research
- Engineering
- Enforcement
- Education
- Program Improvement
Federal Railroad Administration

Data, Analysis, and Research Focus Area

Objective: Better understand grade crossing accidents, fatalities, and injuries to ensure development of appropriate countermeasures and focus for future research and outreach.

- Grade Crossing Location Clean-Up
- Tech Company Coordination
- FRA Internal Data Analysis
- Correlate and Causal Analysis
- Predictive Modeling
Engineering Focus Area

Objective: Provide up-to-date improved engineering standards and best practices for safety improvements at grade crossings.

- Traffic Preemption
- Blocked Crossing Study
- Railroad Crossing Handbook Update
Highway-Rail Crossing Handbook

About the Handbook
- Last update: 2007
- Used by State, regional, and local level stakeholders
- Reference document, not a standard

Updates to the Handbook
- Current
- Interactive design
- More frequent updates

Next Steps
- Input from SCORT members welcome through June 2016
- Email Debra (Dee) Chappell for more information (Debra.Chappell@dot.gov)
**Education Focus Area**

**Objective:** Educate partners, stakeholders, and the wider public about grade crossing safety to improve awareness, understanding, and safer behavior.

- Motorist/Pedestrian Outreach
- Continued Support of Operation Lifesaver, Inc.
- Website Improvements
Website Improvements

Combined, deaths at railroad crossings and trespassing account for approximately 95% of all rail-related deaths. Sadly, almost all of these deaths are preventable.

Trespassing along railroad rights-of-way is the leading cause of rail-related deaths in America. Nationally, more than 400 trespass fatalities occur each year, the vast majority of which are preventable.

Railroad crossing incidents are the second leading cause of rail-related deaths in America.

With the assistance of FRA’s programs, the number of fatalities has been reduced by 94% over the last two decades. FRA’s Railroad Crossing Safety and Trespasser Prevention Division remains committed to continuing this trend.

I Can Improve Rail Safety. I am a...

PEDESTRIAN & MOTORIST

STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

LAW ENFORCEMENT & FIRST RESPONDER
Enforcement Focus Area

Objective: Develop enforcement strategies for improving grade crossing safety through enhanced law enforcement and regulatory compliance.

- National Working Group
- First Responder Videos
- “Take 10” Campaign
Program Improvement Focus Area

Objective: Improve safety at high risk grade crossings through grant management and collaborative efforts with other agencies and organizations.

- STEP GX Project Selection
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Section 130 Coordination
- State Action Plans
State Action Plans

Original Requirement: RSIA2008, Section 202
- 10 States
- Based on 3 items of interest

New Requirement: FAST Act, Section 11401
- FRA and FHWA collaborating on requirements

- Available until Model State Action Plan is available
- Located on the FRA website

Under Development: Model State Action Plan
- Per NTSB recommendation from Miriam, NV crash
- Model Plan available later in 2016
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FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION

Funding Availability: FY 2015

- $10M STEP GX Funding
- $220M Section 130 Freight and Highway Projects
FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION

Funding Availability: FAST Act + FY16

- FY16: $350M
- FY17: $230M

- FY16: $6.5M
- FY16: $11.1B
- FY16: $800M
- FY16: $25M

- NHTSA Ad Campaign
- Surface Transportation Block Grant
- Freight and Highway Projects
- Railroad Safety Grants
- TIGER Grants
- Section 130

Moving America Forward
How can FRA help your State improve Grade Crossing Safety?

1. Layering funds sources
2. Providing additional data
3. Overcoming obstacles to solutions
For more information visit us at www.fra.dot.gov

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