



ASSOCIATION OF
AMERICAN RAILROADS

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Railroads on Track for Safest Year Ever

U.S. Railroads on Track to Post All-Time Lowest Train Accident Rate

WASHINGTON, October 17, 2007 – Railroads reported the fewest train accidents in more than a decade for the first seven months of 2007. Our nation’s railroads experienced 263 fewer train derailments and collisions during the first seven months of 2007 – a 15.2 percent reduction – compared to the same period last year. If the trend continues through the end of the year, 2007 will see the railroads’ lowest accident rate ever – 3.19 per million train miles — according to preliminary data released by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). In addition, highway-rail grade crossing accidents declined by 7.3 percent; and grade crossing fatalities were down by 11.2 percent.

“Safety is job one for the railroads and their employees,” said Edward R. Hamberger, president and CEO of the Association of American Railroads (AAR). “These record-setting numbers clearly indicate that our extensive employee training programs, our investment in safety technology and our dedication to infrastructure maintenance and improvement are paying safety dividends for all Americans.”

The railroads’ train accident rate, which tracks the number of accidents per million train miles, was 10 percent lower than the current full-year record of 3.54 accidents per million train miles established in 1997. Specifically, the number of derailments declined by 14.3 percent and train-to-train collisions fell 12.1 percent.

Further, the FRA’s data revealed that the two leading causes of train accidents — human error and track issues — declined 12.5 percent and 11.1 percent, respectively. Incidents caused by equipment failure fell by 11.3 percent and by signal problems declined by 36.0 percent.

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The AAR is the world's leading railroad policy, research and technology organization focusing on increasing the safety and productivity of rail carriers. Its members include the leading freight railroads in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

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