



Illinois Commerce Commission

NEWS

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It's Illinois Rail Safety Week

The State of Illinois has declared the week of September 13-19, 2015, as Illinois Rail Safety Week to promote vehicle and pedestrian safety around railroad tracks and trains.

The Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) has the statutory responsibility to improve safety at public highway-rail crossings in the state. During 2014, Illinois ranked 2nd in the nation in vehicle collision fatalities and 5th in the nation in trespasser fatalities, with 134 crossing collisions involving motor vehicles resulting in 55 injuries and 24 fatalities. In addition, there were 48 trespasser incidents that resulted in 19 injuries and 29 fatalities when people trespassed on to railroad property.

"The importance of rail safety awareness for Illinois residents cannot be overstated," said ICC Chairman Brien Sheahan. "The Commission takes seriously its duty to educate consumers on this topic and supports Illinois Rail Safety Week as an opportunity to do just that."

"More than 67 percent of all collisions occur at crossings with active warning devices (flashing lights, gates, and ringing bells)," said Chip Pew, Illinois Commerce Commission state coordinator for Illinois Operation Lifesaver. "This figure proves that ultimately, awareness is a key factor in reducing the number of incidents. We can't rely, solely, on warning devices."

Nationally, Illinois is second only to Texas in the total number of highway-rail crossings with over 7,600 highway-rail grade crossings, over 750 of which are on state roads, and more than 6,900 of which are on local roads. More than 3,740 grade crossings are on private property and not subject to the State's jurisdiction

Pew and other ICC staff will participate in outreach and educational activities throughout the week including a railroad detail activity of CSX rail in Fayette County which will involve grade crossing, pedestrian crossing, and trespassing enforcement. On September 14, Pew will speak to driver's education students at Lincoln Community High School in Lincoln, Illinois and on September 17, Pew and ICC Police Chief Kim Castro will distribute educational materials at the James R. Thompson Center.

For more information about Illinois Rail Safety Week, please visit www.illinoisrailsafetyweek.org.

Follow the ICC on Twitter @ILCommerceComm.

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About the Illinois Commerce Commission

The Illinois Commerce Commission's mission is to pursue an appropriate balance between the interests of consumers and existing and emerging service providers to ensure the provision of adequate, efficient, reliable, safe and least-cost public utility services. The Commission pursues this mission through three bureaus: the Consumer Services Bureau provides educational information on utility issues, resolves customer/utility disputes and develops rules on utility service and consumer protection; the Public Utility Bureau focuses on financial and operational analysis, policy development, public safety and enforcement activities related to electric, natural gas, water, sewer and telecommunications companies; the Transportation Bureau includes trucking insurance and registration, railroad safety, relocation towing, safety towing and household goods moving company enforcement activities. The ICC's five commissioners are appointed by the Governor and approved by the Illinois State Senate for five-year terms.