

Attachment 5



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Federal Railroad
Administration

Private Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety Research and Inquiry

Office of Research
and Development

Office of Safety

Washington, DC 20590



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public through the National Technical Informa-
tion Service, Springfield, VA 22161.
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Web site at www.fra.dot.gov.

1 Introduction

The FHWA Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) defines a public highway-rail grade crossing as any intersection between a public roadway and railroad. The roadway on either side of the crossing must be a public roadway, i.e., under the jurisdiction of, and maintained by, a public authority and open to public travel. If either approach to a crossing does not qualify as a public roadway, then the crossing is typically classified as a private crossing.

In 2006, over 94,400 private highway-rail grade crossings in the United States were in existence, at which over 400 incidents occurred, resulting in over 30 fatalities.

Currently, accurate estimations of the physical conditions, operations, maintenance procedures, and estimated risks at private highway-rail grade crossings in the United States are unavailable, in large part because private crossing data are limited, incomplete, and in some instances inaccurate. Further, the nature of private ownership and the contractual rights between private property owners and railroads have complicated Federal, State, and local governmental authority over these types of crossings.

From July 2006 through July 2007, FRA, with support from USDOT/RITA/Volpe National Transportation Systems Center (Volpe Center), conducted a safety inquiry to solicit comments from private crossing owners, railroads, and other interested parties on safety issues at private highway-rail grade crossings.

This report documents the information gathered during the safety inquiry. The document will include the process employed by FRA and the Volpe Center, written and oral commentary, and a summary of regional and local regulations, standards, and practices specific to private crossings.