



Rail Safety in Washington State

The Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) has a role in regulating railroads within the state for public safety. The UTC regulates safety at public railroad crossings across the state with the exception of the state's First Class Cities, where local governments work directly with railroads.

At public crossings under its jurisdiction, the UTC also evaluates and issues decisions on new crossings as well as modifications or closures of existing crossings. It also inspects public crossings for compliance with safety standards and approves funding from the state Grade Crossing Protective Fund to help all jurisdictions pay for upgrades at crossings and along railroad rights-of-way.

The UTC partners with the Federal Railroad Administration through the State Safety Participation Program, which authorizes UTC inspectors to be trained and certified to enforce federal regulations for hazardous materials, signal and train control, track, motive power, and equipment and operating practices. The FRA ultimately enforces the standards.

In addition, the UTC protects railroad employees by inspecting walkways within railroad yards and evaluating requests for exemptions to overhead and side clearance rules. The UTC investigates complaints related to crossing conditions, walkways, and train noise, and promotes public awareness of railroad safety through Operation Lifesaver Washington State, a non-profit public education program.

By the numbers...

Washington's First Class Cities:

Aberdeen	Spokane
Bellingham	Richland
Bremerton	Tacoma
Everett	Vancouver
Seattle	Yakima

28 railroad companies operate more than 3,000 miles of track with trains traveling an average of 10 million miles a year in Washington state.

Washington has approximately 2,700 public rail crossings.

For more information, visit www.utc.wa.gov/rail



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