

visited 6/1/2009

Illinois Commerce Commission

527 East Capitol Avenue, Springfield, Illinois, 62701

Inspections Program

The Rail Safety Section of the Illinois Commerce Commission's Transportation Bureau exercises its oversight responsibility through the enforcement of State laws and rules, and through a cooperative agreement with the Federal Railroad Administration. The Rail Safety Section is charged with the responsibility for implementing the Illinois Commerce Commission's safety oversight of freight railroads that operate in Illinois, as well as the Illinois portion of the MetroLink light rail system¹. The major areas of rail safety handled by the Rail Safety Section include:

Track Safety

Transportation of Hazardous Materials

Railroad Signals and Train Control

Railroad Operating Practices

¹Note: Light rail safety oversight includes highway-rail grade crossing signal systems and grade crossing safety only.

Track Safety

Inspect railroad tracks to determine compliance with Federal Railroad Administration and State of Illinois Track Safety Standards; investigate complaints of unsafe/defective trackage, excessive train speeds and improper yard procedures;

Prepare and review reports on regular inspections and formal track safety violations for use in the compliance and enforcement process; prepare recommendations on track safety issues;

Investigate and respond to complaints from railroad employees, railroad unions and the general public with regard to track safety and other issues.

Hazardous Materials

Conduct equipment inspections at railroad yards, sidings and interchange tracks, railroad terminals, along mainlines and at interchange points to observe and note violations in marking, placarding, and the placement of hazardous material cars within the trains; conduct facility inspections at private shipping and consignee facilities to ensure compliance with loading/unloading procedures and containment of the product; conduct waybill inspections at railroad terminals and freight offices where bills are prepared and/or on file;

Testify as an expert witness at Commission judicial proceedings concerning proposed projects, railroad violations, incidents, policies and technical matters involving railroad hazardous materials operations;

Escort Spent Nuclear Fuel rail shipments through the state.

Railroad Signal and Train Control

Inspect railroad signal systems to determine compliance with Federal Railroad Administration and State of Illinois Signal Safety Standards; investigate complaints of unsafe/defective signal systems;

Prepare and review reports on regular inspections and formal signal system safety violations for use in the compliance and enforcement process; prepare recommendations on signal system safety issues;

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Perform railroad crossing signal inspections to determine compliance with FRA grade crossing signal maintenance rules; review designs and operational plans for interconnected railroad crossing devices that are interconnected with traffic signals; recommend changes/alteration of crossing warning devices and controls.

Railroad Operating Practices

Conduct inspections for the purpose of determining compliance with all sections of the Federal Operating Practice Regulations and Hours of Service Act; prepare and review reports for those inspections, and recommend the initiation of enforcement actions when appropriate to promote compliance;

Conduct inspections of railroad facilities for the purpose of determining compliance with Federal Railroad Administration and State of Illinois Standards regarding structural clearances, employee facilities, and sanitary regulations.