

# Ohio

# Public Utilities Commission



# 2018 Rail Statistics Report

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Sam Randazzo, Chairman

# Public Utilities Commission

Commissioners

M. Beth Trombold  
Dennis P. Deters  
Daniel R. Conway  
Lawrence K. Friedeman

August 15, 2019

Dear Fellow Ohioans:

Ohio is a major crossroads for the railroad industry. With approximately 5,000 miles of track and 5,700 public grade crossings and 36 freight railroads operating within our state, Ohio has the fifth highest rail traffic in the country.

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO), in conjunction with the Ohio Rail Development Commission, is responsible for ensuring the safety of motorists at public grade crossings in Ohio. PUCO rail inspectors inspect the warning devices that are essential for motorist safety. The PUCO also approves funding for enhancing safety at public grade crossings.

This year, the PUCO is excited to announce the introduction of a redesigned Ohio Railroad Information System (ORIS) website. The public now has access to detailed, real-time data on grade crossing accidents and blocked rail crossings. This data can be filtered by location, date, severity, and much more. The ORIS website is available at: <https://GradeCrossings.PUCO.ohio.gov>

With the addition of the ORIS website, the 2018 Rail Statistics report will now focus on statewide trends. County-specific information will always be available and current on the Rail Commission site. If you have any questions about this report or ORIS, feel free to contact us at:

Public Utilities Commission of Ohio  
Rail Division  
180 E. Broad Street – 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215-3793  
(614) 466-1150

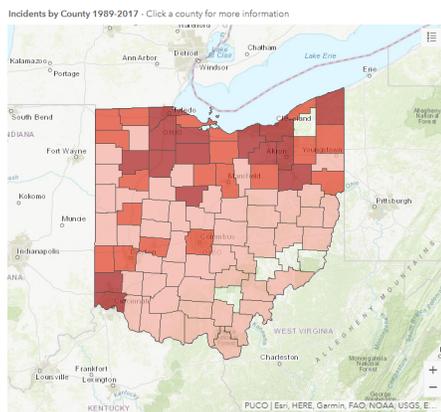
Sincerely,

Randall Schumacher  
Chief of Motor Carrier & Rail Enforcement Division

# What can I do with the new ORIS?

*The newly redesigned Ohio Railroad Information System website can now display current data about grade crossing accidents and blocked crossings.*

Learn more about where 2018 crashes occurred:



[Interactive map and charts](#)

Learn more about 2018 crossing improvements:



[Project locations](#)



Learn more about blocked crossings in your area:

[Blocked crossing dashboard](#)

# Overseeing Ohio Railroad Safety



*The PUCO works to ensure safety of over 5,700 public railroad crossings and works with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to assist in providing oversight of approximately 5,000 miles of railroad track. PUCO rail staff works to accomplish this goal through inspections, safety upgrades and funding programs.*

## Federal Railroad Administration State Inspector Program

The FRA State Inspector Program is administered by the FRA (U.S. Department of Transportation) which trains qualified PUCO rail inspectors in one of five disciplines: track; signals and train control; hazardous materials; operating practices; and motive power and equipment (mechanical). After completing the sometimes multi-year apprenticeship process, the federally-certified inspectors conduct inspections throughout the state. They enforce 49 CFR 200–299 (freight rail regulations) as well as 49 CFR 171–180 (hazardous materials). These inspections involve hazardous materials by rail; physical track inspections; mechanical inspections of locomotives and train cars; inspections of the grade crossing warning devices, as well the signals systems used to communicate with the trains; and inspections of the practices and procedures of the railroads. PUCO FRA-certified inspectors work closely with federal inspectors to improve the safety of Ohio’s railroads.

## Railroad Inspections

PUCO rail inspectors monitor grade crossings, inspect railroad tracks and equipment, and investigate all grade crossing incidents. These inspectors work across Ohio responding to the concerns of the public such as complaints of rough crossings, excessive noise and overgrown weeds and vegetation that can obstruct sight at railroad crossings. Safety at railroad crossings has improved greatly in recent years as a result of these inspections.

## Safety Upgrades

The installation of warning devices such as flashing lights and roadway gates is one way safety can be improved at rail crossings. Over the past 15 years, the PUCO has approved 3,300 safety upgrades at crossings throughout the state, with 54 upgrades approved in 2018. In addition, many other safety and engineering enhancements have been implemented at Ohio rail crossings.

Ohioans wishing to find more information about grade crossings and recent project upgrades in their community can visit the railroad section of [www.puco.ohio.gov](http://www.puco.ohio.gov).



# Safety Improvement Funding Opportunities

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***Federal and state funding resources are available to local communities to implement safety upgrades and install lights and gates at grade crossings.***

***Federal funding:*** The PUCO, in conjunction with the Ohio Rail Development Commission, works to select Ohio grade crossings for federally-funded safety upgrades. Crossings for these upgrades are chosen based on a priority list that ranks the crossings in order of risk of accident. Criteria to determine the risk of accident include the number of tracks, average daily traffic, crash history, number of highway lanes, train speed and the number of trains per day. These projects are paid 100 percent through federal funds, and the PUCO monitors the projects to ensure they are completed.

***State Grade Crossing Upgrade Program:*** For crossings not eligible for federal funding, the state-funded Grade Crossing Upgrade Program allows local communities to share the cost of installing safety devices with the state and the local railroad. Communities who utilize this program may be required to pay between 25 and 65 percent of the cost of the project. The PUCO allocates funds for this program based on an objective formula measuring the need for safety upgrades at the crossing and other special conditions that may be applicable. Communities wishing to apply for state funding must submit an application to the PUCO for consideration. A PUCO inspector evaluates the crossing site to determine the appropriate level of funding assistance. Construction of the upgrades begins after a financial assistance proposal is approved by the local highway authority and the local railroad.



# Safety Improvement Funding Opportunities

**Supplemental Assistance Program:** A supplemental assistance program is administered by the PUCO to help communities install safety enhancements at crossings in addition to crossbuck signage or lights and gates. Through this program, the PUCO provides up to \$5,000 for physical improvements around the crossing, including rumble strips, illumination, improved signage or vegetation removal.

To apply for supplemental assistance, the local highway authority must submit an application to the PUCO for approval. If approved, a contract will be prepared for the local highway authority and the PUCO to sign. When construction of the project is completed and approved, the local highway authority can then submit the cost for reimbursement of up to \$5,000.

**Consolidation Program:** In 1991 the Federal Railroad Administration set a goal to close 25 percent of highway-grade crossings in the United States, and the PUCO is committed to working toward this goal. The consolidation program works to eliminate unnecessary crossings in exchange for implementing safety improvements at other crossings along the same rail corridor. These improvements, such as lights, gates, signage and illumination are paid for through federal, state and railroad funds. When a local community agrees to permanently close a grade crossing to vehicle traffic the state works to provide funding for the agreed-upon upgrades.

Communities wishing to participate in the consolidation program should have the local highway authority contact the PUCO. A team surveys the site, evaluates the project and negotiates the levels of participation of the local highway authority and the railroad. Typically, local authorities hold public hearings before deciding to close a public crossing. The PUCO adopts a signed agreement by all parties before construction begins, and the Commission approves the program and issues project deadlines.

# The Ohio Rail Hotline

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The Ohio Rail Hotline at (866) 814-RAIL is a toll-free number administered by the PUCO, the Ohio Rail Development Commission and the Ohio Department of Transportation. This hotline provides information and answers to questions about railroad crossings in Ohio, including:

- Specific railroad crossings, such as location and type of warning devices
- Funding for railroad crossing safety devices and other crossing improvements
- Railroad operation in Ohio
- Railroad development opportunities
- Rail corridor improvements or public grade crossing closures

Please visit [www.ohiorail.ohio.gov](http://www.ohiorail.ohio.gov) for more information about Ohio railroads.

## Questions or concerns?

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For more information about the PUCO's role in Ohio railroad programs, contact the PUCO Rail Division at (614) 466-1150 or visit the railroad section of [www.PUCO.ohio.gov](http://www.PUCO.ohio.gov).

To report railroad emergencies, grade crossing crashes and other incidents, please contact the appropriate local railroad:

- CSX  
(800) 232-0144  
[www.csx.com](http://www.csx.com)
- G&W Companies (Ohio Central Systems, Columbus & Ohio River Railroad, Ohio Central Railroad, Warren Trumbull Railroad, Ohio Southern Railroad)  
(800) 733-0026  
[www.gwrr.com](http://www.gwrr.com)
- G&W Companies (Indiana & Ohio Railway, Chicago Ft. Wayne & Eastern, Central Railroad of Indiana)  
(800) 979-4958  
[www.gwrr.com](http://www.gwrr.com)
- Norfolk Southern  
(800) 453-2530  
[www.nscorp.com](http://www.nscorp.com)
- R.J. Corman Railroads  
(800) 772-9091  
[www.rjcorman.com](http://www.rjcorman.com)
- Wheeling & Lake Erie  
(877) 767-7203  
[www.wlerwy.com](http://www.wlerwy.com)

# Ohio Rail Crossing Statistics 2018

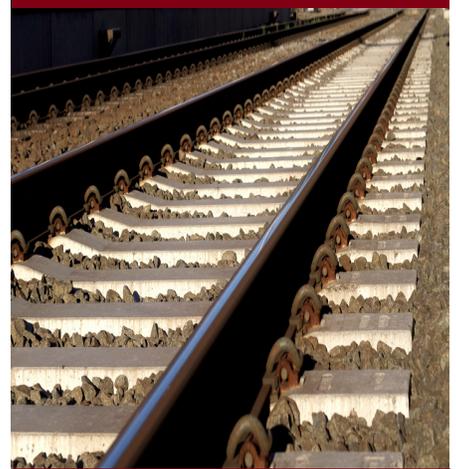
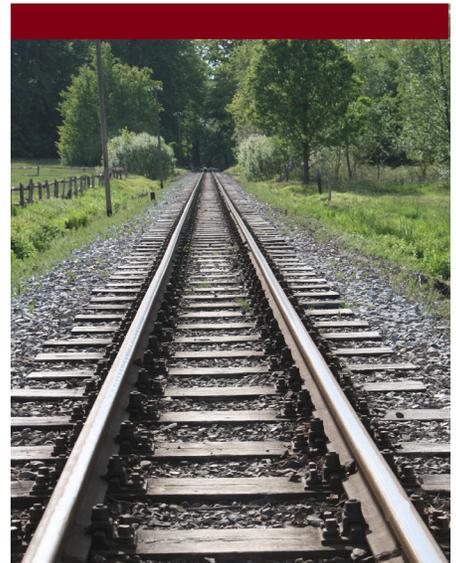


*In 2018, the PUCO continued its important mission of monitoring rail transportation in Ohio. Improving safety is a vital part of this mission. A total of **54** federal, state and locally-funded safety upgrades were ordered during the year including the installation of lights and gates, supplemental assistance upgrades, circuitry upgrades and closings.*

*The PUCO's staff of federally certified inspectors conducted **543** FRA railroad inspections in 2018. All 5,708 public grade crossings in Ohio were inspected for safety.*

*The PUCO is proud of the success in Ohio rail safety. The number of train-vehicle crashes at Ohio public highway-rail grade crossings has decreased significantly, from 123 in 2001 to 68 in 2016 to **66** in 2018.*

*While the PUCO believes that active warning devices play an important role in rail crossing safety, there is much work to be done to educate motorists on how to safely travel across railroad crossings. Many of these crashes occurred because of motorist actions including failure to stop, driving around the gates or stopping/stalling on the tracks.*



# 2018 Statistics at a Glance

**593**

federal inspections by  
PUCO inspectors

**5,708**

state grade crossings  
inspected

**235**

rail complaints  
resolved

**54**

counties with no  
crashes

**66**

total crashes

**14**

injury crashes

**15**

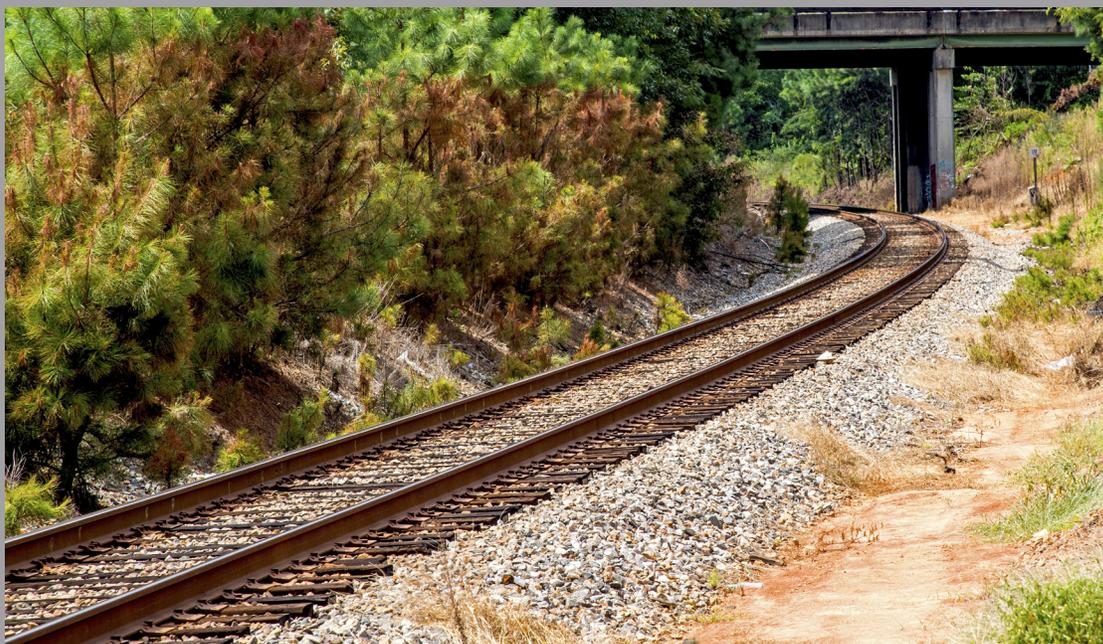
injuries

**8**

fatal crashes

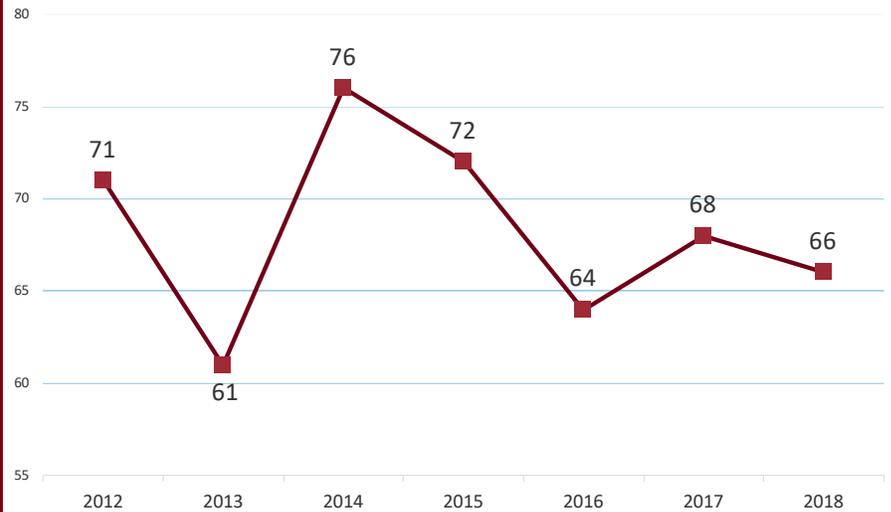
**8**

fatalities

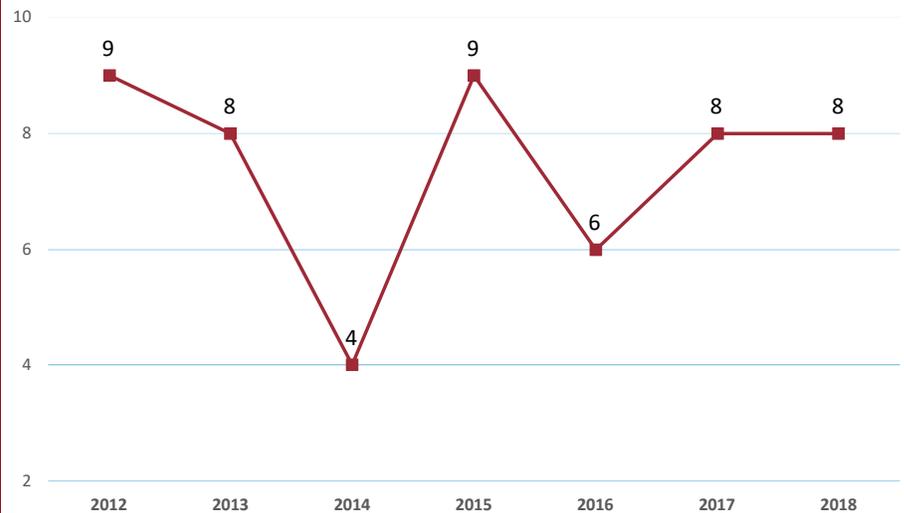


# 2018 Analysis

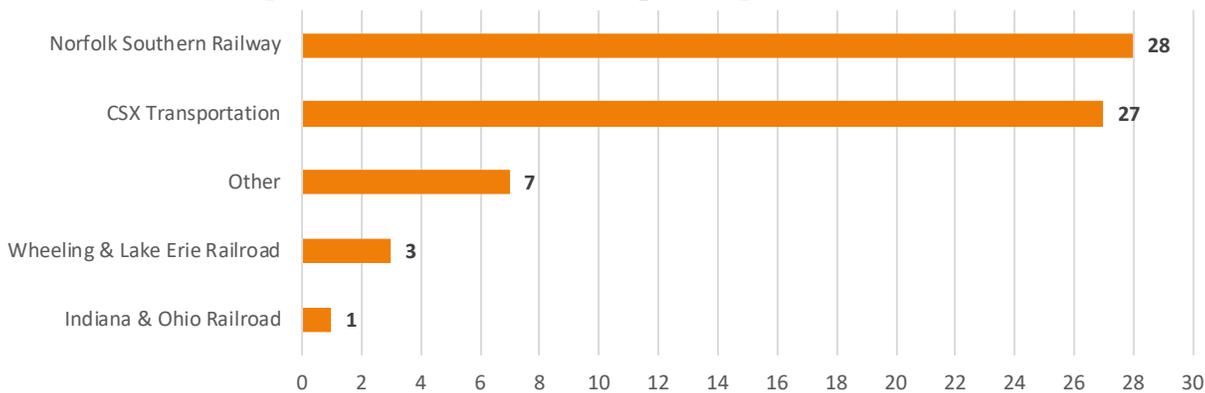
## Total Railroad Crashes 2012 - 2018



## Total Railroad Crash Fatalities 2012 - 2018

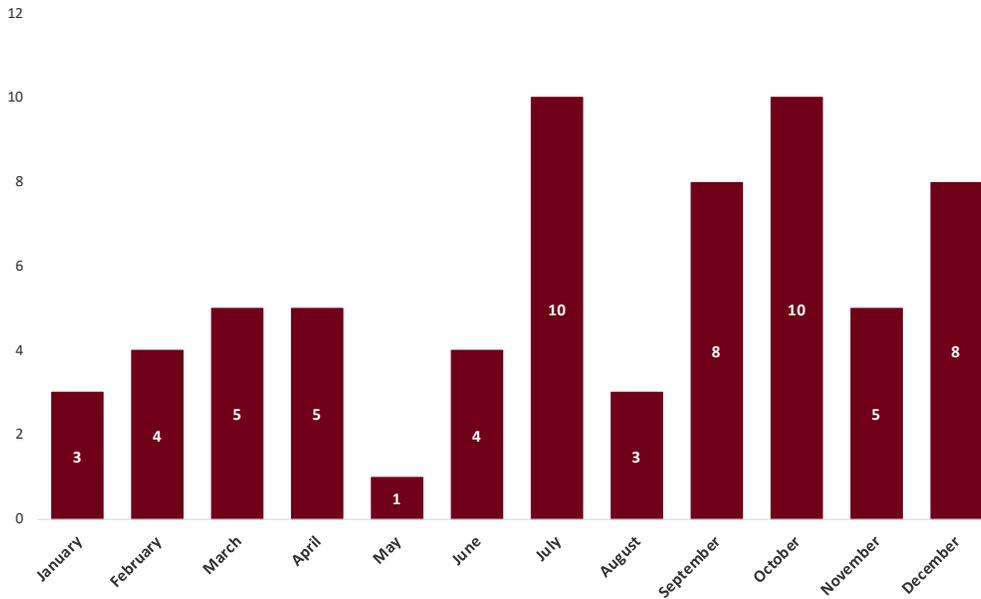


## Crashes by railroad company



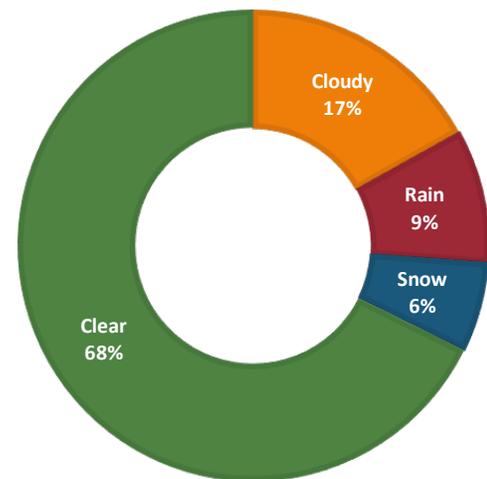
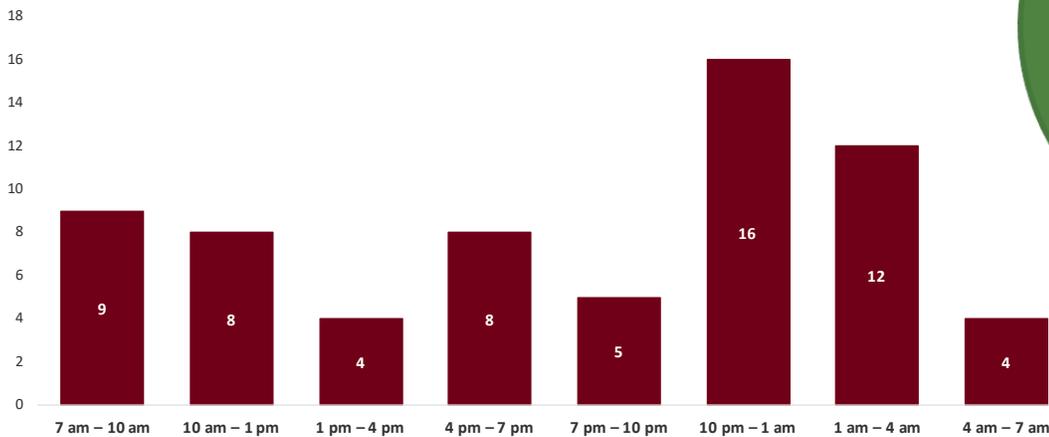
# When crashes occurred

## Crashes by month



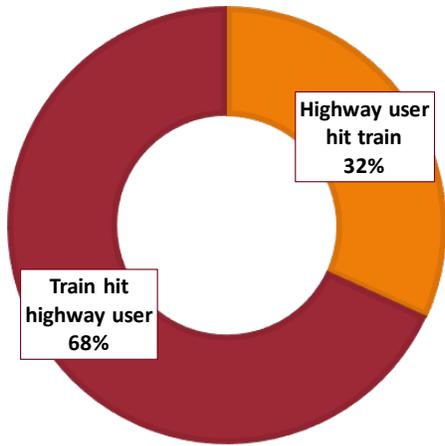
## Crashes by weather condition

## Crashes by time

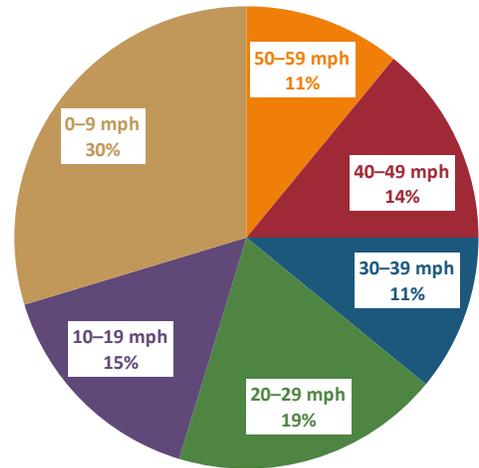


# Why crashes occurred

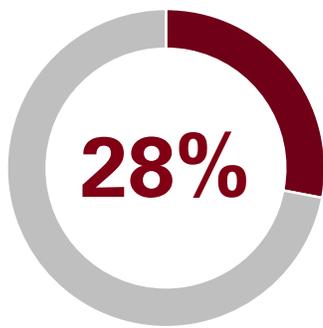
Circumstances of crash



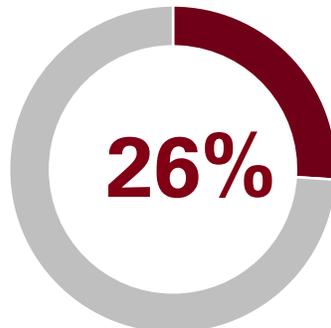
Speed of train in crash



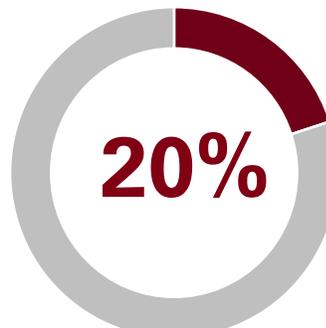
Motorists' actions before crash



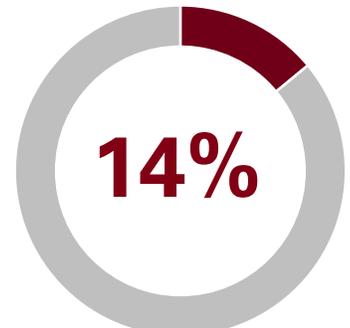
stopped on crossing



did not stop

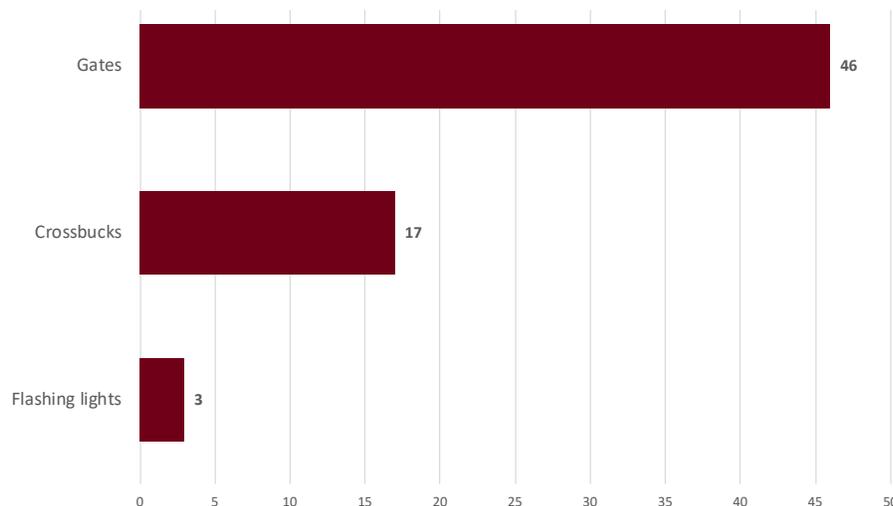


went around the gates



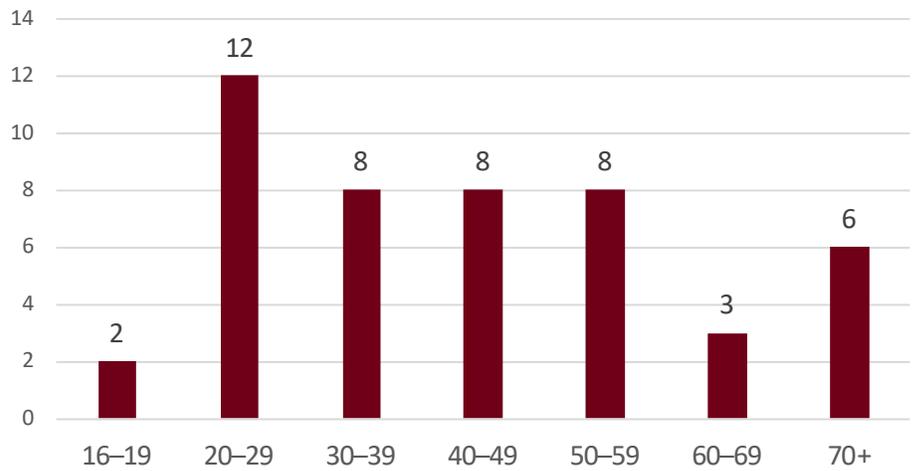
stopped, then proceeded

Railroad crashes by warning device

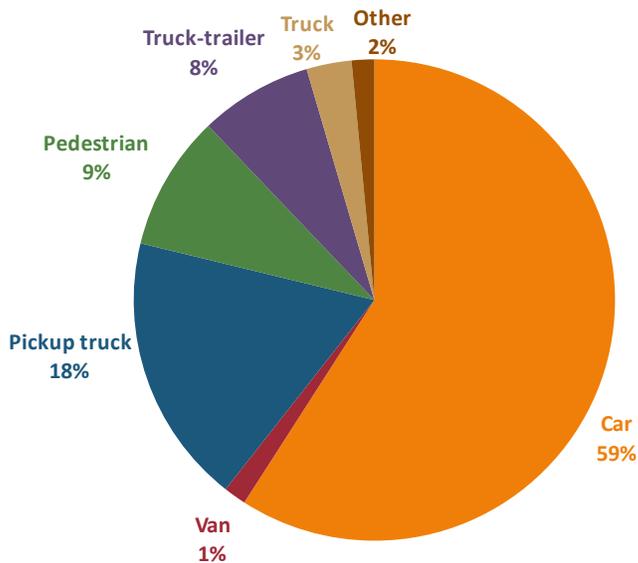


# Who was involved

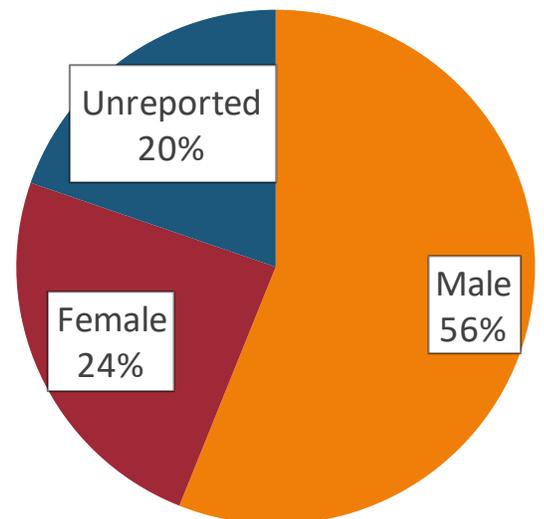
## Crashes by motorist age



## Crashes by vehicle type



## Crashes by gender



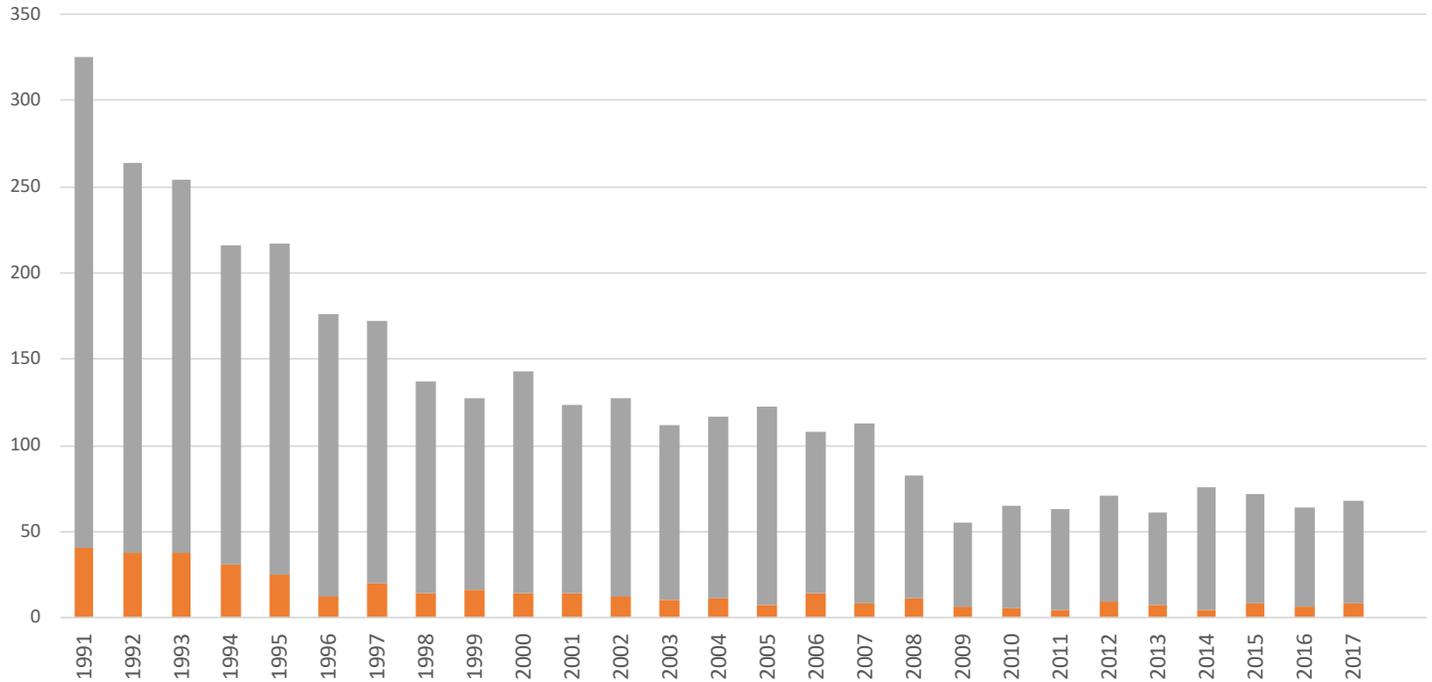
# Railroad crash statistics

## 2018 crashes by county

County	Crashes	Fatalities	Injuries
Allen	1	0	1
Ashtabula	2	0	1
Belmont	1	0	1
Butler	2	0	0
Clark	2	0	0
Columbiana	1	1	0
Crawford	1	0	2
Cuyahoga	4	1	0
Darke	2	0	0
Defiance	3	1	1
Delaware	2	1	0
Erie	3	1	0
Fulton	3	0	2
Greene	1	0	0
Hamilton	3	1	1
Hancock	1	0	0
Huron	1	0	0
Lawrence	1	0	0
Lorain	2	0	1
Lucas	7	0	1
Marion	2	0	1
Mercer	1	0	0
Montgomery	2	0	0
Pickaway	1	0	0
Putnam	1	0	0
Richland	1	0	1
Ross	1	1	0
Sandusky	1	0	1
Shelby	1	0	0
Stark	2	0	0
Summit	1	0	0
Trumbull	1	0	0
Union	1	0	0
Washington	3	0	0
Wayne	1	0	0
Williams	1	1	1
Wood	2	0	0
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>

# Railroad crash statistics

## Crashes from 1991 - 2018



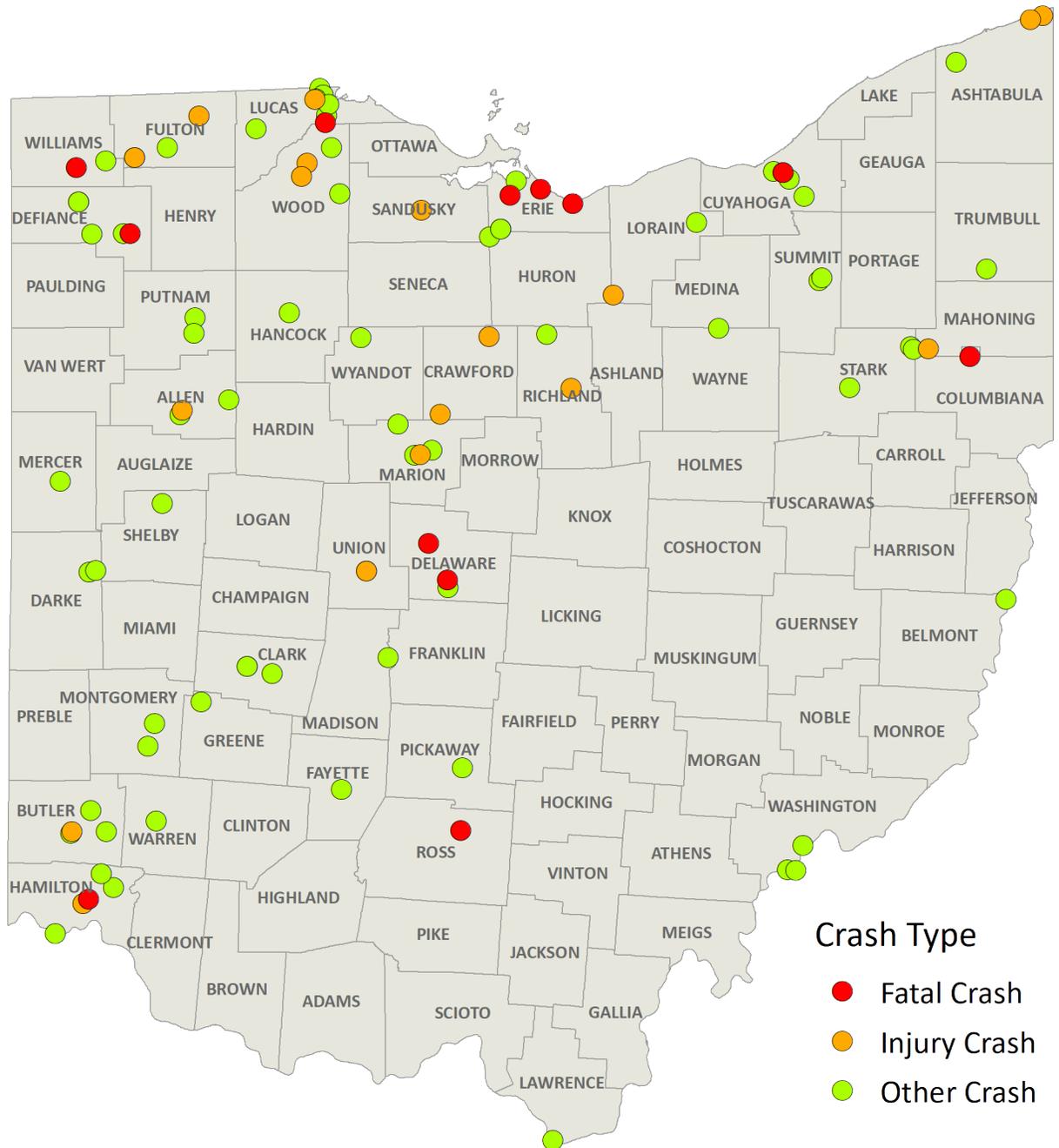
Year	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Total Crashes	325	264	254	216	217	176	172	137	127	143	123	127	112	117
Fatal Crashes	41	38	38	31	25	12	20	14	16	14	14	12	10	11
Number of Fatalities	53	45	42	38	32	13	27	14	19	15	23	20	11	13

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total Crashes	122	108	113	82	55	65	63	71	61	76	72	64	68	66
Fatal Crashes	7	14	8	11	6	5	4	9	7	4	8	6	8	8
Number of Fatalities	7	16	8	12	6	5	4	10	8	4	9	6	8	8

**1991 - 2018**  
 Total Crashes **3596**  
 Fatal Crashes **407**  
 Number of Fatalities **476**

# 2018 Railroad Crash Locations



# PUCO-ordered improvements

Year	Total Improvements	Lights and Gates	Supplementals
1991	Unknown- Data not available		
1992	166	149	0
1993	181	157	0
1994	125	107	0
1995	72	44	0
1996	69	51	0
1997	140	115	0
1998	95	70	0
1999	228	174	0
2000	72	52	3
2001	230	177	22
2002	164	111	27
2003	65	34	16
2004	103	75	11
2005	123	86	17
2006	74	51	9
2007	87	65	3
2008	75	36	21
2009	94	68	6
2010	133	72	29
2011	46	12	9
2012	543	85	56
2013	82	63	3
2014	97	60	10
2015	176	52	7
2016	96	46	15
2017	102	57	6
2018	54	32	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3492</b>	<b>2101</b>	<b>270</b>

