



**For Immediate Release**  
April 11, 2017

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## **ICC Issues 5-Year Rail Crossing Safety Improvement Program**

CHICAGO - The Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) has approved the 5-year plan for the Crossing Safety Improvements Program at railroad grade crossings and highway-rail grade separations across the state. Over the course of Fiscal Years 2018-2022 the ICC expects to initiate automatic warning device installations for circuitry upgrades at nearly 220 crossings, construct or reconstruct 18 grade separations (bridges) and make low-cost improvements at over 1200 crossings.

The ICC prioritizes these projects based on safety factors like collision history, necessary improvements to rail corridors with conventional speed passenger trains and the need to add more highway and pedestrian separations. Grade separations create the safest possible passage because vehicles and pedestrians cross above or under the tracks, making no direct contact with the tracks themselves.

In 2016, Illinois recorded 102 collisions at public crossings resulting in 25 deaths and 36 injuries. Those statistics are a reduction from 2015, when Illinois reported 125 collisions, 30 deaths and 83 injuries. The ICC is dedicated to “The Three E’s” of railroad safety: Education through Operation Lifesaver Illinois; Enforcement of existing laws to ensure motorists and pedestrians obey all railroad safety laws; and the Engineering necessary to make crossings physically and operationally as safe as possible.

The scope of the projects range from new automatic flashing light signal and crossing gate installations to new and improved vehicle and pedestrian bridges. Safety improvements may include increasing the vertical clearance for motor vehicles passing under railroad bridges, replacing older warning signals and gates, synchronizing grade crossing warning signals with adjacent traffic signals or installing sensor devices that will immediately alert the railroad to any failures in warning device operations.

The annual 5-year plan outlines the statutory obligations and goals for improving public safety at rail crossings across the state pursuant to Public Act 90-659 paid, in part, by the Grade Crossing Protection Fund (GCPF). The Illinois General Assembly created the GCPF, which uses a portion of the motor fuel tax designated specifically for rail safety programs, to support the majority of the costs of improvements at highway-rail grade crossings and highway-rail bridge crossings involving local roads and streets.

The recommendations in the report assume that local funding matches will be available in a timely manner. In the event they are not, the Rail Safety Section Staff may recommend to the Commission to re-allocate GCPF assistance for those projects to another fiscal year.

The Crossing Safety Improvement Program Plan is published annually during the first week of April. To view the 2018-2022 plan on the ICC's website, [click here](#).

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***About the Illinois Commerce Commission***

The Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) is a quasi-judicial body made up of five Commissioners. Through its Public Utility Program, the Commission oversees the provision of adequate, reliable, efficient and safe utility services at the least possible cost to Illinois citizens served by electric, natural gas, telecommunications, water and sewer public utility companies. Through its Transportation Regulatory Program, the Commission oversees public safety and consumer protection programs with regard to intrastate commercial motor carriers of general freight, household goods movers, relocation towers, safety towers, personal property warehouses and repossession agencies. The Commission's Rail Safety Program also inspects and regulates the general safety of railroad tracks, facilities and equipment in the state.

To learn more about the Commission, its offices and bureaus, click [here](#). If you are a consumer who needs help resolving a utility dispute call 800-524-0795 or file an online complaint [here](#). For a complaint related to transportation, call 217-782-6448.

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