

This is the official newsletter of **Utah Operation Lifesaver (Utah OL)**, a nonprofit public safety education and awareness organization dedicated to eliminating collisions, fatalities and injuries at highway-rail grade crossings and trespassing on railroad tracks.

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Executive Director's Message – Utah Rail Safety Week 2025

Utah Rail Safety Week, September 15-21, 2025, was very successful. This year Utah Operation Lifesaver teamed up with Utah Transit Authority (UTA), the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), and the Utah Department of Public Safety, which includes the Utah Highway Patrol (UHP) and the Utah Highway Safety Office (UHSO).

Utah Rail Safety Week hosted a full week of educational, enforcement and outreach activities. The goal of Utah Rail Safety Week was to raise awareness for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists on keeping themselves safe around railroad tracks and at railroad crossings. “We are grateful for the positive response from the media and our safety partners across Utah as many activities for Utah Rail Safety Week were carried out,” said Utah Operation Lifesaver Executive Director Vern Keeslar.”

This year safety partners from UTA, UDOT, and UHP issued a press release instead of the normal press conference. This press release kicked off a full week of education, outreach, and enforcement activities to heed. In 2024, there were 15 railroad crossing collisions resulting in 3 fatalities and 3 injuries. For trespassing, there were 7 incidents resulting in 3 fatalities and 4 injuries. Finally, there were four suicide attempts resulting in 3 fatalities and 1 injury. The press release also provided a link to www.rideuta.com/safety which provided highlighted videos of close calls from UTA's TRAX light rail system and FrontRunner commuter rail system.

Railroad safety signs are not just symbols; they are lifesavers. Whether you are behind the wheel, on a bike or motorcycle, or walking near railroad tracks, each sign is designed to keep you safe. This year's theme was “*Every Sign Tells A Story*” which included the following four messages to stay safe.

- The one where you call the number
- The one where you stop at the crossing
- The one where you paid attention
- The one where you walk your bike

Utah Rail Safety Week Activities

The following list includes the events for Utah Rail Safety Week 2025.

Operation Clear the Track Tuesday – September 16, 2025

Utah Highway Patrol, UTA Police Department, and Provo City Police Department were out from 7:00 am to 8:30 a.m. enforcing the laws at the following track crossings: 1300 South and 2100 South in Salt Lake City and Freedom Boulevard and 500 West, 700 West, and 900 West in Provo. Law enforcement partners stopped 16 vehicles and 5 pedestrians. There were 17 citations issued and 3 warnings.

Welcome Wednesday – September 17, 2025

UTA's Safety and Security team and Utah Operation Lifesaver volunteers were at Herriman High School and Fremont High School giving 3 presentations to 92 driver education students on rail safety education. Each student received a key chain as a reminder on how to safely maneuver a railroad crossing. Further, each student received a rail safety pamphlet to take home and share with their parents and others in their household.

Transit Thursday – September 18, 2025

UTA Police and its K-9 unit were at Salt Lake Central Station from 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm, offering the public an opportunity to meet the K-9 officers, watch the K-9 demonstration, ask questions and learn more about staying safe on UTA vehicles and property. The public was invited to sign a pledge to be

safe at railroad crossings, on passenger platforms, and near railroad property. The question was asked, "Why do you stay safe around railroads? Giveaway items were distributed to participants as a token of appreciation and as reminders to be safe at railroad crossings.

Football Friday – September 19, 2024

Utah Operation Lifesaver distributed educational posters at the following high schools for the week before their home high school football games. In addition, safety messages were provided for announcements during school and at the football games to educate the audience about the importance of railroad crossing safety:

- Freemont High School in Plain City
- Viewmont High School in Bountiful
- West High School in Salt Lake City
- Jordan High School in Sandy
- Skyridge High School in Lehi

All Aboard Saturday – September 20, 2025

Utah Rail Safety Week culminated with free train rides at Shay Park in Saratoga Springs from 9:00 am until noon. Hundreds of kids and parents enjoyed receiving a free train ride courtesy of Utah Live Steamers. Utah Operation Lifesaver had their rail safety booth there providing paper engineer hats, pencils, bookmarks, and ink pens for children and adults.

Utah Rail Safety Week – September 15-21, 2025

In a united effort to enhance public safety around railroad crossings, Utah Operation Lifesaver, the Utah Transit Authority, the Utah Department of Transportation, and Utah Highway Patrol teamed up to educate pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers, and riders throughout Utah about rail safety.

Utah Rail Safety Week began Monday, September 15, 2025 and continued through Saturday, September 20, 2025 with activities designed to reduce rail-related accidents by raising awareness among pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers about the dangers of unsafe behavior near tracks.

"The safety of our riders, operators and people on the road is priority number one at UTA," said UTA Trustee Jeff Acerson. "Our partnerships with organizations dedicated to rail safety are crucial to raising awareness and reducing the number of preventable incidents."

"UDOT has a long history of partnership with UTA, Utah Operation Lifesaver and the Department of Public Safety, and we appreciate all the efforts they contribute to meeting UDOT's goal of Zero Crashes, Injuries and Fatalities," said Brad Palmer, rail division director at Utah Department of Transportation. "Despite our collective best efforts, we need the help of the public to keep everyone safe. We ask that everyone please obey all traffic laws and be cautious and alert around trains and highway-rail grade crossings."

"Utah Rail Safety Week brings much-needed awareness to the traveling

public about railroad crossing safety and serves a reminder to obey all signs and warning devices at a railroad crossing,” said Vern Keeslar, executive director of Utah Operation Lifesaver. “Motorists, bicyclists and micromobility users all need to be aware that we must yield the right of way to the trains.”

Thanks to all our safety partners and volunteers for helping to make Utah Rail Safety Week successful!

Below is a selection of photos from Utah Rail Safety Week activities.



Every Sign Tells A Story.



UTA Police Officers and their K-9 Unit.



Salt Lake Central Station.



Every Sign Tells A Story themes.



UTA and UDOT employees working together to share the message of rail safety.



Attending and supporting Utah Rail Safety Week event.



The Emergency Notification System sign. The one where you call the number.



Utah Highway Patrol and UTA Police Departments working together on Operation Clear Track.



Telling their story.

