



Newsletter Volume 22 Number Three Third Quarter 2026

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 2026

Utah Rail Safety Week, September 21-26, 2026, 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).

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. "Utah Rail Safety Week is an important opportunity to remind everyone that safety around railroad tracks and crossings starts with awareness," said Vern Keeslar, executive director of Utah Operation Lifesaver. "Whether you're driving, biking or using a micromobility device, always obey crossing signs and warning devices, stay alert and never try to beat a train. Trains have the right of way, and taking a few extra moments to stop and wait can prevent a tragedy."

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. The press release also provided a link to [Rail Safety Week Page](#) which provided information about Utah Rail Safety Week. The Rail Safety Week Page included UTA's "Trains Don't Swerve" series of videos of close calls from UTA's TRAX light rail system and FrontRunner commuter rail system.

"UTA and our community partners are committed to raising awareness and reducing the number of preventable railway incidents," said Travis King, director of safety and security at UTA. "Too often we see moments of carelessness around rail crossings or tracks. The purpose of Utah Rail Safety Week is to remind the public that staying aware, following posted signs and signals, and exercising caution could save your life."

"UDOT is proud to partner with UTA, Utah Operation Lifesaver and the Utah Department of Public Safety to promote rail safety and help prevent crashes, injuries and fatalities," said Brad Palmer, rail division director at the Utah Department of Transportation. "Keeping our communities safe around trains and rail crossings is a shared responsibility. We urge everyone to stay alert, obey traffic laws and never take unnecessary risks



around railroad tracks and crossings. A few extra seconds of caution can make a life-saving difference.”

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 highlighted six signs that you find at a railroad crossing to remind you to be safe.

1. No Train Horn
2. Do Not Stop On Tracks
3. Advanced Railroad Crossing Warning Sign
4. Railroad Crossbuck Sign
5. Emergency Notification System Sign
6. Look Sign

Utah Rail Safety Week Activities

The following list includes the events for Utah Rail Safety Week 2026.

All Aboard: Saturday, September 19, 2026. Utah Rail Safety Week partnered with Utah Live Steamers at Shay Park Railroad in Saratoga Springs for family-friendly train rides on their 7.5-inch gauge railroad. Utah Operation Lifesaver had their rail safety booth there providing paper engineer hats, pencils, bookmarks, key

chains, and ink pens for children and adults.

Safe Driving Education: Monday, September 21, 2026. Utah Rail Safety Week begins rail safety presentations to new drivers at Orem High School and with a social media focus on safe driving around railroad tracks and crossings.

Operation Clear Track: Tuesday, September 22, 2026

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: Ballpark Station in Salt Lake City, Center Street in North Salt Lake City, Central Point Station in South Salt Lake City, and Freedom Boulevard and 500 West in Provo. Law enforcement partners issued 10 traffic citations, 16 pedestrian citations, and 14 warnings.

Trespass Prevention: Wednesday, September 23, 2026

Wednesday focuses on preventing trespassing on or near railroad tracks and connecting people with resources that can help keep our communities safe. Throughout the day, UTA and safety partners shared information and resources focused on trespass prevention, mental health and recognizing situations where someone may need help.

Transit Day: Thursday, September 24, 2026

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 Games: Friday, September 25, 2026

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:

- Bountiful High School in Bountiful
- Stansbury High School in Stansbury Park
- Woods Cross High School in Woods Cross
- Juab High School in Nephi
- Provo High School in Provo

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.



Photo: The Utah Operation Lifesaver booth at Shay Park in Saratoga Springs with the Utah Live Steamers giving rides on their 7.5-inch gauge railroad.



Photos: Amy Yokota's driver education class at Orem High School receives a rail safety presentation to kick off Utah Rail Safety Week.



Photo: UTA team members at Salt Lake Central Station educating the public on rail safety during Utah Rail Safety Week.



Photo: The four Travises (left to right) Travis Shingleton, Travis IV (Safety Mascot), Travis King, and Travis Hoenshell.



Photo: UTA Executive Director Jay Fox participating in public outreach at Salt Lake Central Station on "Transit Thursday" during Utah Rail Safety Week.



Photo: UTA safety employee Kent Muhlestein and long-time volunteer with Utah Operation Lifesaver shows the safety stickers created for Utah Rail Safety Week.



Photo: UTA Police Officer with canine officer attending the "Transit Thursday" outreach event at Salt Lake Central Station.



Photo: Utah Operation Lifesaver Executive Director Vern Keeslar being interviewed by KUTV Channel 2 News.



Photo: UTA Strategic Communications Manager Matthew Humpherys posing between railroad crossings safety signs created by the Strategic Communications Team.



Photo: UTA Police Officer with canine officer attending the "Transit Thursday" outreach event at Salt Lake Central Station.

Photo (right): UTA's graphic design artist Logan Kemsley posing with characters she created to remind the traveling public to be safe at railroad crossings. The next three photos also were characters of railroad crossing signs that she brought to life with her talent!

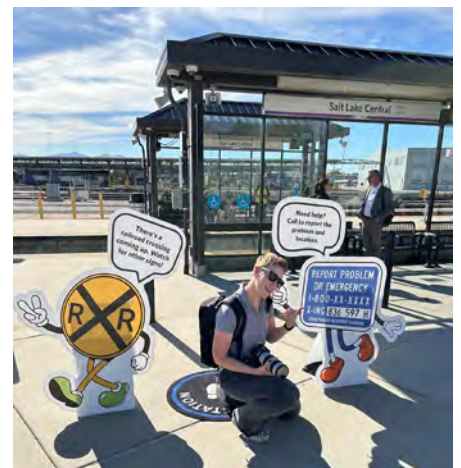




Photo: UTA Police Officer issuing a citation for a railroad crossing traffic violation during Operation Clear Track during Utah Rail Safety Week.



Photo: Utah Highway Patrol and UTA Police working together to enforce laws at a railroad crossing for Operation Clear Track during Utah Rail Safety Week.



Left: This poster was created for Utah Rail Safety Week and distributed and displayed at the following five high schools: Bountiful High School, Juab High School, Provo High School, Stansbury High School, and Woods Cross High School. Rail safety messages were also distributed to the high schools so that announcements could be made each morning to the students by student body officers. Also, the announcements were provided for public service announcements during their home football games.