

Montana Public Service Commission Railroad Inspection Program

The Initiative: To build a more robust federal/state partnership program to improve railroad safety and decrease railroad accidents by increasing support for The Montana PSC's railroad inspection program. Specifically, Montana PSC would like to secure funding to expand its rail safety inspection program beyond MP&E (Mechanical freight car safety standards, locomotive safety standards, safety appliance standards, brake system standards, passenger equipment standards, etc.) to include track and operating practices.

The Montana PSC Railroad Inspection Program

- Voluntary participation in a Federal Railroad Administration program to conduct railroad safety inspections.
- Negligible federal contribution via grant program. (less than \$5,000/year)

National Train Accident Data

- Train accidents per million train miles 2020—2.89
- Train accidents per million train miles 2023—3.06

Western State Comparison

Track-miles/State	Total Rail Inspectors
• Montana – 3,680	2 (currently MP&E only)
• North Dakota – 3,223	3 (1 MP&E, 1 Track, 1 Hazmat)
• Washington – 2,876	10 (2 MP&E, 2 Track, 2 Signal, 2 OP, 2 Hazmat)
• Oregon – 2,369	10 (2 MP&E, 2 Track, 2 Signal, 2 OP, 2 Hazmat)
• Idaho – 1,654	1 (1 Hazmat only)
• Nevada – 1,193	5 (2 MP&E, 1 Track, 1 OP, 1 Hazmat)
• Arizona – 1,724	6 (1 MP&E, 2 Track, 1 Signal, 1 OP, 1 Hazmat)

Major recent railroad developments In Montana

- **4/2/2023 Paradise Derailment (track failure)**
- **6/24/2023 Reed Point Derailment (8 Hazmat cars derailed, active FRA/NTSB investigation, Possible bridge abutment/track failure)**
- 8/18/2023 River Road East Fire
- 12/31/2023 MRL/BNSF Merger Finalized
- **2/19/2024 Franklin Derailment (26 empty Hazmat cars) (track failure)**

2023 Montana Inspections Results

- State Inspections: 293
- Joint FRA Inspections: 41
- Defects: 1827
- Violations: 2