

## **NEBRASKA OPERATION LIFESAVER STATE COMMITTEE MEETING**

March 12, 2020

[www.nebraskaol.org](http://www.nebraskaol.org)

[www.oli.org](http://www.oli.org)

Find us on Facebook: Nebraska Operation Lifesaver

Carol Daley called the meeting to order.

### **Safety Briefing:**

Billy Anderson conducted the safety briefing.

### **INTRODUCTIONS:**

Carol Daley, OL State Coordinator – Nebraska  
Deb Ashworth – Union Pacific Railroad (retired)  
Rich Kotan – OPPD (retired)  
Billy Anderson – BNSF Railroad  
Dan Chapp – BNSF Railroad  
Jeff Schmid – BNSF (retired)  
Roger Figard – Railroad Transportation Safety District  
Trevor Sindelar – NDOT  
Abe Anshasi – NDOT  
Don Butler - NDOT  
Bill Kovarik – Nebraska Office of Highway Safety  
Carrie Bartholomew – Nebraska Safety Center  
Taylor Kelley – Nebraska Central Railroad  
Jeri Willms – Union Pacific Railroad (retired)  
Hilda Gurwell – NEOL Secretary

### **Statistics:**

Trevor Sindelar reviewed the following handouts (see attachments).

- Nebraska Traffic Fatality Toll Comparison as of March 12, 2020
- 2019 Nebraska Railroad Fatalities – Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities/Non-Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities
- Trevor reported that they were still finalizing 2019 safety data. The data collection process is playing catch up, they wait for a death certificate to indicate the manner of death (for example if the person had a heart attack and were involved in an accident, it is considered medical as to the incident – not a traffic fatality since that was the cause of death. They are working with the University of Nebraska Lincoln on a highway railroad crossing prediction model and the inventory of highway railroad crossings. Carol stated that she would like Trevor to conduct a short presentation on NDOT's statistics and their methodology at the next OL meeting.

Deb Ashworth discussed the following handouts (see attachments).

- Nebraska Operation Lifesaver Statistic Worksheet (1/1/2012 – 12/31/19) source for this data is from the Federal Railroad Administration.

### **Mobile Training Trailer Updates**

Dan Chapp talked about the maintenance work that had been done on the mobile training trailer and ensured that the trailer is up to DOT compliance. He had them put new bearings, alignment, brakes fixed, and replaced the tow bar wheel on the front of the trailer. He asked anyone that uses the trailer to let him know if you notice any problems and he would get it fixed.

Dan also said that he was very close to getting a trailer donated to Nebraska Operation Lifesaver that needed new tires and axles before it was road ready. It would be used to haul the BNSF mini train at train shows and other Operation Lifesaver events.

Dan also commented that we should utilize the mobile billboards and place them at different areas where we know we have safety issues at crossings (UP Awareness Trailers) and do this in conjunction with the Department of Roads. Roger Figard brought up the reroutes on the railroads and Dan said to utilize the blue ENS signs to communicate information to the railroads by giving the DOT numbers to report issues.

### **Financials**

Carol reported that we currently have \$20,693.11 in our operating budget fund and that was because we received our funding from BNSF. She also reported that she had sent out 120-130 invoice letters communicating what Nebraska Operation Lifesaver was and soliciting \$300 from various partners across Nebraska. She attended Roger's Railroad Transportation Safety District Board meeting and presented to his board and received a check for \$300. There were 3 City Councilman and 3 County Board present. (Thank you, Roger, for your support of Nebraska Operation Lifesaver.)

### **Year End Reporting**

Carol reported that all states in Region 6 (Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, and Colorado) turned in their year end reports that were due by January 31<sup>st</sup>, and all states in our Region would receive their \$1,500 for this administrative year end task.

### **Old Business:**

#### **Posner Family Foundation Update**

Carol handed out the Posner Family Foundation Suicide Brochures. Carol had reached out to 3 or 4 groups in the Omaha area to partner with Nebraska Operation Lifesaver on this initiative. The brochure is attached to the minutes. Deb suggested that we hand these out to newspapers as it talks about things the press can do to avoid copycat suicide attempts and "the media can also be a tremendous resource for those at risk by encouraging vulnerable individuals to seek help, changing public perceptions, and correcting myths about mental health and suicide." Carol did not receive any return calls so put Boystown National Institute's 800 number to call as a local resource.

#### **2020 Nebraska Operation Lifesaver Fundraiser**

Carol reported that Nebraska Operation Lifesaver would not have a fundraiser this year.

#### **2020 MO KS NE IA Highway Rail Safety Conference Update**

Carol again invited anyone that wanted to attend the 2020 Highway Rail Safety Conference to sign up and she would reimburse them for the cost of admittance to the conference. The conference is in Blue Springs, Missouri on March 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. (Agenda for conference is attached.) In 2021 it is Nebraska's turn to host the conference.

Abe Anshasi reviewed what would be covered at the conference this year.

#### **GCCI Update**

Carol updated the team on GCCI and stated that it was on plan for a June rollout. Deb advised to Carol that she wanted to be a part of the Nebraska train the trainer session. Carol passed a worksheet on the overview of each of the four modules. (See attached).

#### **Update on Driver's Education and School Bus presentations**



Deb updated that she had presented to the Driver's Ed teachers at the UNK campus in Kearney, Nebraska. All driver education instructors were given the information to become OLAV's and/or also information to contact us if they want railroad safety presentations as part of their driver education training. She also trained the school bus drivers for Holiday Bus Express in Grand Island, NE on January 30<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Lincoln Train Show Update**

Dan Chapp reported that this was the biggest show to date with Saturday bringing in between 1500-1700 and Sunday was less, but the trailer was in a great location as the audience came into the show. Nebraska Operation Lifesaver conducted 70 presentations to various audience groups during the two-day train show.

#### **Nebraska OL at the ballfield**

Carol updated that the Storm Chaser night out at the ball game would be on April 18<sup>th</sup> at 2:05PM and invited everyone to come and help at the safety booth and she would buy your baseball tickets.

#### **New Business:**

##### **Summary of State Coordinator Summit & NAC meeting**

Carol attended the State Coordinator Summit and NAC meeting. Carol also stated that Morton is now the official vendor (not Elite) for Operation Lifesaver and at the end of the year there will be a refund on the total money that has been spent by all the states and each state will receive a percentage – even if you did not spend much it will be evenly divided.

##### **Union Omaha Soccer Organization partnership**

She also received communication from the professional soccer organization to conduct a night out at the soccer field which would be played at Werner Field in Papillion. Hilda and Dan Chapp were asked to check into communicating with Cory Livingston to get more details on potentially getting a team autograph ball signed to raffle off or small soccer balls with autographs. More to come on this event.

##### **OLI Leadership Conference in Omaha – November 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>**

Carol is asking for volunteers to assist in pre-work at the leadership conference that will be held in Omaha November 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> at the Embassy Suites near the Harriman Dispatching Center. Carol is thinking of offering a history tour utilizing Ollie the Trolley. More information to come on this event. Dan Chapp suggested that Carol contact Larry the Cable Guy to be one of the guest speakers.

##### **OLAV Motivational Drawing**

Jeff Schmid was the winner (a total of 73 presentations in this time frame)

##### **Adjournment:**

Meeting adjourned

Any corrections or additions will be noted at the next meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Deb Ashworth

**Next NE OL State Meeting: May 14, 2020**



**Nebraska Operation Lifesaver  
State Committee Meeting  
March 12, 2020**

**Safety Briefing – Billy Anderson**

**Introductions & welcome guests**

**Nebraska Statistics – Jan Voss**

**Nebraska OL Presentation Statistics – Deb**

**Board and Officer Reports**

Financials for 2019 – Carol

**Old Business**

Posner Family Foundation Suicide brochures - Carol

Year End reports – Region 6 –Completed = \$1,500

Raffle Update - Carol

Highway Rail Safety Conference – March 18 &19, 2020 (Missouri)

GCCI Update – Carol

Update on Driver's Education & School Bus Drivers presentations – Deb

Lincoln Train Show update – Dan Chapp

Omaha Storm Chaser game – April 18 at 205PM

**New Business**

Summary of State Coordinator Summit & NAC meeting - Carol

Union Omaha Soccer Organization partnership – Carol

✓ Night on the Soccer Side

OLI Leadership Conference in Omaha (November 18 & 19) - Carol

**Presentation Opportunities – Hilda**

Boy Scout Railroad Merit Badge – March 14<sup>th</sup> – Stu Sutherland

Equestrian Show April 4 – 7

College World Series June 13-24 (coverage June 13 – 15)

Roll A Dice - Deb

**Open Discussion – Future projects, all input would be appreciated**

**Adjournment: Next meeting: May 14, 2019**

March 12, 2020

**2020 NEBRASKA RAILROAD FATALITIES  
MOTOR VEHICLE TRAFFIC FATALITIES**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>FATALITIES</u>	<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>LOCATION &amp; RAILROAD COMPANY</u>	<u>Alcohol-Related</u>
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Train Fatalities

2009	4
2010	2
2011	2
2012	3
2013	2
2014	3
2015	1
2016	3
2017	3
2018	6
2019	1
2020	0

Train Injuries

2009	18
2010	4
2011	13
2012	13
2013	18
2014	8
2015	6
2016	13
2017	7
2018	19
2019	19

Train Crashes

2009	38
2010	20
2011	19
2012	23
2013	25
2014	28
2015	16
2016	25
2017	22
2018	37
2019	24

March 12, 2020

**NON-MOTOR VEHICLE TRAFFIC FATALITIES  
2020**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>FATALITIES</b>	<b>COUNTY</b>	<b>LOCATION RAILROAD COMPANY CRASH TYPE</b>
1-4-20	1	Washington	Delayed Death: 30-day Rule (Hwy S89A) In Kennard Union Pacific Train – Motor Vehicle



# Nebraska Traffic Fatality Toll Comparison

Daily Count Thru 8:00 A.M. Wednesday March 11, 2020

COMPARISON TO DATE	THUS FAR		URBAN		RURAL BY ROADWAY			URBAN BY ROADWAY			BY SELECTED CRASH TYPES				
	BY MONTH	BY YEAR	URBAN	RURAL	INST.	OTHER HWYS.	CO. ROADS	INST.	OTHER HWYS.	LOCAL ROADS	MOTOR- CYCLE	ATV	TRAIN	PEDES- TRIAN	BIKE
2015	14	48	13	35	8	19	8	1	4	8	3	1	0	6	0
2016	3	25	7	18	1	7	10	0	1	6	1	0	1	2	0
2017	4	41	14	27	2	17	8	2	2	10	1	0	0	4	0
2018	8	42	9	33	5	18	10	1	3	5	0	0	0	6	0
2019	2	30	9	21	3	16	2	1	4	4	0	0	0	3	0
2015 - 2019 Average	6.2	37.2	10.4	26.8	3.8	15.4	7.6	1	2.8	6.6	1	0	0.2	4.2	0
2020	2	34	9	25	6	16	3	1	5	3	3	1	0	2	0
% Change 2019 - 2020	0%	13%	0%	19%	100%	0%	50%	0%	25%	-25%	100%	100%	0%	-33%	0%
2020 Compared to 2015 - 2019	-68%	-9%	-13%	-7%	58%	4%	-61%	0%	79%	-55%	200%	100%	-100%	-52%	0%

Prepared By: Highway Safety - Accident Records Section, Traffic Engineering Division  
Nebraska Department of Transportation



## Nebraska Operation Lifesaver Statistic Worksheet from 1/1/2013 – 12/31/2019

1. Most collisions occur with trains traveling under **30** mph.
2. Approximately **64%** of all collisions occur in daylight hours.
3. Most collisions occur within **25** miles of the driver's home.
4. Approximately every **3 hours** (some place in the United States) a collision occurs between a train and a vehicle or a train and a pedestrian.
5. You are **20** times more likely to die in a collision with a train than in a collision involving another motor vehicle.
6. At 55 mph, it may take a train up to a **mile** or more to stop.
7. Nearly **50%** of all collisions occur at crossings equipped with active warning devices.
8. Nearly **25%** of all collisions occur when the vehicle runs into the side of the train.

Nebraska has a total of **4,838** crossings. There are **2,872** Public and **1,966** Private crossings.  
2,872 Public Crossings: 713 have gates and 171 have activated warnings and 1,988 are Passive.

**Note: Statistics updated 3/10/2020**

National Crossing Collisions	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Collisions	2,219	2205	2,122	2,049	2,079	2,296	2,104
Injuries	793	805	843	855	1,046	870	977
Fatalities	299	272	271	255	237	262	232
National Trespasser Incidents							
Injuries	531	478	511	480	418	423	432
Fatalities	607	580	509	467	450	471	427
Nebraska Crossing Collisions							
Collisions	29	46	24	35	27	37	41
Injuries	18	13	7	14	9	10	23
Fatalities	6	7	4	3	1	4	2
Nebraska Trespasser Incidents							
Injuries	9	4	0	4	1	3	2
Fatalities	6	0	2	4	0	1	1

Source – Federal Railroad Administration – [www.fra.dot.gov](http://www.fra.dot.gov) (**FRA Data updated through 12/31/2019**)

The Nebraska Operation Lifesaver information contact is Carol Daley – State Coordinator  
Email – [cadaley@nebraskaol.org](mailto:cadaley@nebraskaol.org) or call (402)-657-0439 and Nebraska website is [www.NebraskaOL.org](http://www.NebraskaOL.org)



## Ne Operation Lifesaver Carol Daley

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**From:** Huntley, David (FRA) <david.huntley@dot.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 9, 2020 8:26 AM  
**To:** Francis Edeker; Ne Operation Lifesaver Carol Daley  
**Subject:** Three additions to OIL

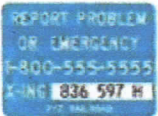
Francis an Carol – As info in case you had not heard. It's great to have some new members and new faces to OLI.

### **Railway Age Magazine Contributing Editor Discusses New Arrivals At OLI.**

[Railway Age Magazine](#) (3/8) Capitol Hill Contributing Editor Frank Wilner writes that there seems to be a revived Operation Lifesaver Inc. (OLI) "commitment evidenced in three relatively new arrivals." Wilner also writes that around 2,000 OLI volunteers throughout the nation carry "a simple slogan, 'Always Expect A Train.' Accompanying that message is education on train safety, the law as it applies to grade crossings and rail private property, encouragement that those laws be enforced, and pleas for improved civil engineering to make rail crossings safer." OLI's new arrivals are retired history professor Rudolph Daniels, "who travels at his own expense thousands of miles across Iowa annually to make OLI-endorsed presentations at schools and before civic groups and to first responders and police," American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association Safety and Regulatory Affairs Senior Vice President Jo Strang, who previously served as the Federal Railroad Administration's chief safety officer, and Railroad Development Corp. Chairman Henry Posner III.

*David E. Huntley*

Grade Crossing Inspector  
& Trespass Prevention  
Federal Railroad Administration - Region 6  
515-418-8314  
See Tracks – Think Train – (Stay Safe)



# OFFER RESOURCES AND INSPIRE HOPE

## MESSAGING OF HOPE

Consider crafting content that inspires hope and highlight individuals overcoming suicidal thoughts. These articles can help provide a counterpoint to more common reports of individuals dying by suicide. These types of stories have been shown to reduce suicide rates (referred to as the Papageno Effect, also discussed in [WHO/MSD/MER/17.5](#)).

## WHEN REPORTING ABOUT A RAILWAY SUICIDE

There is always a choice about whether to discuss an incident as a suicide or simply as a fatality on the railway. If a decision is made to report on the incident as a suicide, consider offering helpful information or resources for vulnerable individuals who may read this story. Consider including information about warning signs for those at risk (e.g., see [www.afsp.org](#)) as well as resources where vulnerable individuals may seek help (see below).

**Also consider the impact of the story on train crews.** Train operators are powerless to quickly stop a train if a person is on the tracks. Language that implies fault, such as “train kills person”, may add stress to an already challenging time in that train crew’s life.

### NATIONAL RESOURCES

[National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)  
Free 24/7 Helpline

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

[Crisis Text Line](#)  
Free 24/7 Support

Text HOME to 741741

### LOCAL RESOURCES

[Boystown National Institute](#)

Dial 1-800-448-3000  
or [www.boystown.org](#)

## SPECIFIC REPORTING LANGUAGE: DOS AND DON'TS

### INSTEAD OF...

- × Local Man Commits Suicide at Broadway Station
- × Suicide on Springfield Line of General Railroad

- × The death occurred after the man jumped from the south end of the platform as the train entered Broadway station
- × She faced the train with her head looking up and her arms outstretched as the train struck and killed her

- × Train kills person

- × Images of memorials or grieving friends
- × Images of trains or train platforms

### HEADLINES

### DETAILS

### FAULT

### IMAGES

### CONSIDER...

- ✓ Local Man Died on Tuesday Afternoon
- ✓ Woman Trespassing on General Railroad Tracks Struck and Killed

- ✓ The man was struck and killed near Broadway Station.
- ✓ After trespassing onto the railroad tracks the woman was struck and killed by the train.
- ✓ It appears that the actions of the individual were intentional.

- ✓ Person struck by train

- ✓ School photo or work photo
- ✓ No photo or stock photos (e.g., caution tape)



# SAFE AND EFFECTIVE MESSAGING ON RAIL INCIDENTS

Useful Tips for Effective Reporting on Rail Suicide

## WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Irresponsible reporting and messaging following a suicide death may result in ‘copycat’ suicide attempts, also referred to as *suicide contagion*. This phenomenon, known as the Werther Effect, is known to contribute to elevated suicide rates (see [WHO/MSD/MER/17.5](#) from the World Health Organization). This effect has been demonstrated for many methods of suicide, including those that occur on the railway system. Details that are associated with increased risk of contagion may seem critical to the story and are thus included (e.g., the exact location of the incident). However, there are ways to inform the public while still ensuring that the information being communicated is done in a way that reduces the likelihood of imitation by other vulnerable individuals.

The media can also be a tremendous resource for those at risk by encouraging vulnerable individuals to seek help, changing public perceptions, and correcting myths about mental health and suicide. Media can inspire hope and provide resources to those at risk for suicide. By being informed on best practices, the media can play a positive role in suicide prevention.

## CONCEPTS THAT INCREASE CONTAGION

### PERCEIVING SUICIDE AS COMMON

Including **“suicide” in the headline** of an article or using **language that exaggerates rates of suicide** (e.g. “epidemic”, “skyrocketing”) has the potential to mislead the public into thinking suicide is more common than it actually is, and therefore is a common response to life’s struggles. Headlines are especially important as they allow information to quickly spread online and through social media to influence public perceptions.

### IDENTIFYING WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS DIED BY SUICIDE

Elements of an article that **glorify the deceased** or **provide personal details** may prompt a vulnerable reader to identify with the deceased in a way that may make a similar path to suicide more approachable. Similarly, **attributing a suicide death to a single cause** (e.g., loss of job) oversimplifies the complexities of suicide in a way that might mislead the public or make existing thoughts of suicide more salient following similar life events.

### VISUALIZING A PARTICULAR METHOD

Providing **details about the location** of a suicide or the **actions of the deceased** (e.g., jumped in front of a train) may prompt individuals already considering suicide to more clearly imagine the event happening, possibly leading them to identify with the specific method reported.

### PROMOTING MYTHS THAT RAIL DEATH IS QUICK AND/OR CERTAIN

**Emphasis on lethality** or the **convenience/accessibility of the rail system** may be read as a confirmation that the rail system is a viable means for suicide. This idea can be reinforced with the use of **terminology relating to instant or certain death** when someone is struck by a train.





# RAILROAD INVESTIGATION AND SAFETY COURSE

***Approximately every three hours a train collision occurs in the United States often requiring the assistance of first responders at the scene of an incident. The collision scene may be complex and consist of a variety of safety concerns for first responders.***

The Railroad Investigation and Safety Course provides first responders with critical information allowing them to effectively and safely investigate incidents involving the railroad.

## **MODULE 1 - Rail Safety 101**

- Safety issues in the railroad environment
- Signs and signals at a railroad crossing
- Developing advanced preparation information
- Railroad contacts and facilities

## **MODULE 2 - On-Scene Safety & Situational Awareness**

- Safety considerations while responding to an incident
- Ensuring on-scene safety
- Identifying your location
- Key safety points to live by

## **MODULE 3 - Rail Resources & Initial Report Information**

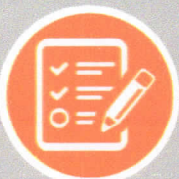
- Familiarization with rail cars, locomotives and train documents
- Railroad personnel and rail related equipment
- Common crimes against the railroad; rail equipment of evidentiary value
- Available partner resources to aid with scene safety and investigation

## **MODULE 4 - Rail Incident Conclusion**

- Taking proper steps to ensure the rail scene is clear
- Documentation of rail incidents on state crash reporting forms
- How train incidents may affect the community and support for prosecution
- Operation Lifesaver and Federal Railroad Administration safety education programs

**Attendees will learn personal safety techniques while they are investigating a grade crossing collision or trespasser incident, in addition to maintaining on-scene safety unique to the railroad environment.**

This course is offered in one-, two-, or four-hour formats and is free of charge.



**OPERATION  
LIFESAVER®**  
Rail Safety Education

For additional program information or to schedule a class,  
email Operation Lifesaver at - [RISC@oli.org](mailto:RISC@oli.org).