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News

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Stepped-Up Enforcement Leads to Federal Railroad Administration's Highest-Ever Penalty Collection Rate

Enforcement push is part of broader effort to increase overall rail safety

WASHINGTON—The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) today announced that its stepped-up enforcement of railroad safety regulations led to the highest-ever civil penalty collection rate in the agency's 50-year history.

For Fiscal Year (FY) 2015, the agency will collect 75 percent of all civil penalties it issued to railroads for violating federal safety regulations – a six percent increase over FY2014, and the largest percentage rate ever collected by the agency. The total amount of civil penalties in FY2015, \$15 million, increased by 12 percent compared to the previous year.

“Safety must be the number one priority for every railroad, and the Department of Transportation will continue to take aggressive action against railroads who fail to follow safety rules,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. “A strong safety enforcement program is critical to prevent accidents, save lives and move our country forward.”

FRA's collection rate is the highest in the agency's history and significantly higher than previous years.

Year	Collection rate
FY 2015	75%
FY 2014	69%
FY 2013	68%
FY 2012	69%
FY 2011	68%
FY 2010	68%
FY 2009	67%

Last year, more than 6,485 railroad company violations resulted in civil penalties. The largest portion of those violations, 29 percent, was for motive power and equipment violations, followed by 26 percent for track violations.

FRA Safety Discipline	Violations Resulting in a Civil Penalty	Percentage
Hazmat	1,327	20%
MP&E	1,869	29%
OP	1,184	18%
Signal & Train Control	416	7%
Track	1,689	26%
TOTAL	6,485	

“Setting a record for collections is an important milestone, but it is just one element of FRA’s broader effort to achieve a safer rail system,” said FRA Administrator Sarah E. Feinberg. “As we continue to aggressively enforce safety regulations, FRA will also continue to implement new, innovative solutions to increase safety.”

The stepped-up enforcement of safety regulations is part of the Federal Railroad Administration’s larger, comprehensive effort to increase safety of the nation’s rail system. Administrator Feinberg has also prioritized railroad crossing safety, improving the safety of hazmat and crude transport, increasing transparency and working more closely with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

To read the full report, visit: https://www.fra.dot.gov/eLib/details/L17311#p1_z5_gD.

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