

ARE YOU PREPARED?



Public Health
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Local Rail Transportation Safety: Technology and Training

Since the December 30th train derailment in Casselton, many citizens are concerned about what is being done to insure the safety of the railroad system and training of local emergency responders to such incidents.

In February, local emergency responders attended BNSF's TRANSCAER (Transportation Community Awareness and Emergency Response) training. Derek Lampkin, manager field operations & emergency response with BNSF, talks about what measures are being taken to increase the safety of rail lines, rail cars, and those who work in the rail industry in the northern plains.

"Rail is the safest mode of land transportation for freight in general, and is one of the safest ways to transport crude oil and hazardous materials. Railroads have reduced train accidents, employee injuries and grade crossing collisions by more than 80 percent since 1980. According to the [Federal Railroad Administration](#), 2012 and 2013 were the safest years in rail history. The result of these significant safety improvement by railroads is that it is much safer to move hazardous materials by rail than on the roads. Yet, we believe that one incident like what occurred in Casselton, is one too many, and we work to prevent them from happening in the first place; through investing in infrastructure to ensure the integrity and reliability of the network, a culture of safety with employees that emphasizes proper training and compliance, and a robust track and equipment inspection program that exceeds federal standards. In 2014, BNSF will invest \$5 billion in infrastructure. Last year in North Dakota alone, BNSF invested over \$200 million in maintenance and expansion.

In 2013, more than 99.99 percent of all hazardous material shipments on BNSF, including crude oil, were delivered without release of any amount of hazmat material. BNSF inspects track and bridges more frequently than required by the Federal Railroad Administration to help ensure they are safe. These inspections include routine visual inspections by track inspectors and inspections with specially equipped rail cars that use ultrasonic and other advanced technology to look for flaws in the rail and to test track geometry, even to monitor the condition of the roadbed under the track with ground penetrating radar. There is an extensive network of detectors on our rail lines that monitor each passing railcar for stresses on the wheels or other components to help prevent equipment failures before they occur.

In addition to safety efforts, BNSF has also continuously prepared for accidents by proactively working and training with local emergency responders on hazmat response and by supporting them with specialized response equipment, and our own hazmat experts and contract hazmat responders to go to the scene in an emergency."

Cass County Emergency Manager Dave Rogness says that local emergency personal are constantly being trained and educated on the rail transportation system, "Emergency responders, including law enforcement, fire departments, and ambulance personnel, have participated in railroad emergency training and exercises within the past few months. These efforts insure that responders understand their responsibilities and capabilities, as were demonstrated during the derailment incident in Casselton on December 30, and 31."

An important fact to remember is that virtually all tank cars in the United States are privately owned or controlled by the shipper. All railroads work closely with shippers to move shipments safely.

To learn more about TRANSCAER, go to www.transcaer.com.

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Red River Radio Amateurs will begin their Spring Training classes on Wednesday, March 5, 2014. To become a RRRR operator, go to www.rrra.org/class_schedule Classes are **FREE** and open to all ages!

CodeRed sign up
www.cityoffargo.com/Emergencies/JoinCodeRed/. If you are unable to signup online call **701-476-4068**. **CodeRED** includes a severe weather warning notification option. If you are already registered for **CodeRED**, please go to the website listed above.

Volunteer Appreciation Night!

Thursday, May 29, at the FM RedHawks Game.

Ice Cream Social in the picnic area for volunteers 6:00 p.m.

Reserved tickets \$5
3rd baseline \$4
General admission \$3

Mention "FirstLink" when ordering tickets, or type "FirstLink" if purchasing online. Discount only for pre-ordered tickets. Ticket fees still apply. Tickets go on sale April 1st.

Preparing for Blackouts/Power Outages

1. Follow energy conservation measures to keep the use of electricity as low as possible, which can help power companies avoid imposing rolling blackouts.
2. Fill plastic containers with water and place them in the refrigerator and freezer if there's room. Leave about an inch of space inside each one, because water expands as it freezes. Chilled or frozen water will help keep food cold during a temporary power outage, by displacing air that can warm up quickly with water or ice that keeps cold for several hours without additional refrigeration.
3. Be aware that most medication that requires refrigeration can be kept in a closed refrigerator for several hours without a problem. If unsure, check with your physician or pharmacist.
4. Keep your car tank at least half full because gas stations rely on electricity to power their pumps.
5. Know where the manual release lever of your electric garage door opener is located and how to operate it. Garage doors can be heavy, so know that you may need help to lift it.
6. Keep a key to your house with you if you regularly use the garage as the primary means of entering your home, in case the garage door will not open.

Shelter-in-Place

The term "sheltering in place" means to get inside a building and remain there during a chemical emergency rather than evacuate the area. Sheltering in place is usually advised when there has been a serious hazardous chemical spill that has quickly caused a toxic atmosphere, and there is not enough time to safely evacuate. Usually, the toxic vapors are dispersed by the wind before an area could be completely evacuated.

If there is a chemical release in your area, you will be notified by the emergency alert system or CodeRED, and the local media. There may be a time when you are closer to an accident. If you hear a strange sound like an explosion; if you see a strange cloud; if you smell a strange odor; if you feel nauseous or have burning or tearing eyes; act immediately--don't wait for the sirens. If it is obvious that you can safely evacuate the area, leave but don't take any chances.

If you are told to shelter in place or if you believe you need to, you should immediately go inside any building close by. If you are not by your own house, a church, school, or store are good options. If you are not near any buildings, even your car is a better choice than staying outside. Watch a demonstration video at:

www.cityoffargo.com/CityInfo/Departments/Fire/GeneralInformation/Shelter-In-Place/Shelter-In-Placevideo.aspx

Become a Weather Spotter!

The National Weather Service will be conducting [SkyWarn](#) trainings in our area in March and April:

March 31, Dilworth Fire Hall, 6:30-9:30 p.m.

April 1, Fargo Public Safety Building-4630, 15th Ave. N. 6:30-9:30 p.m.

April 7, Colfax-Richland County High School, 6:30-9:30 p.m.

April 28, Sabin Fire Hall, 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Spotter classes are free of charge and open to the public. Please contact your Emergency Manger to learn about SkyWarn in your area or to schedule a class in the future.

Cass Fargo Emergency Management: 701-476-4068
Clay County Emergency Management: 218-299-7357
Richland County Emergency Management: 701-642-7788



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torecchia@cityoffargo.com