

Data Summary: Rail-Related Injuries for the Chicago Metropolitan Area

This data summary details rail-related injuries occurring between 2011 and 2020 in the Chicago Metro area consisting of Cook, Dupage, Will, Lake, Kane, and McHenry counties. The full profile, including data figures and county-level incident maps, can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/ChicagoRailProfile>.

Overview

- 508 rail-related injuries occurred in the Chicago Metro area between 2011 and 2020, for an average of 51 injuries per year. The number of injuries in 2020 was about the same as in 2011 (57 and 58).
- Cook County had the most injuries (64%), followed by DuPage (14%), Will (8%), Lake (7%), Kane (6%), and McHenry counties (2%).
- Children ages 0 to 19 years accounted for 14% of injuries.
- Most injuries (93%) involved trains or other on-track equipment while 7% did not involve on-track equipment.
- Trespassing¹ and railroad crossing² incidents accounted for about the same proportion of injuries (49% and 51%). However, 52% of trespassing injuries were fatal compared to 38% of railroad crossing injuries.
- Railroad crossing injuries were most frequent between 3:00 PM and 5:59 PM, while trespassing injuries were most frequent between 6:00 PM and 8:59 PM.

Railroad Crossing Circumstances¹

- Those injured in railroad crossing incidents were most often motor vehicle occupants (64%) and pedestrians (32%).
- Going through or around the gates was the activity most often associated with injury at railroad crossings among both motor vehicle occupants and pedestrians (61% and 49%, respectively).
- 58% of railroad crossing occurred when the weather was clear, 24% during cloudy weather, 10% during sleet, and 9% when it was raining.
- 52% of railroad crossing injuries occurred during dark or low-light hours. Of those, 28% occurred at crossings that were not illuminated by streetlights or special lights.

Trespassing Circumstances²

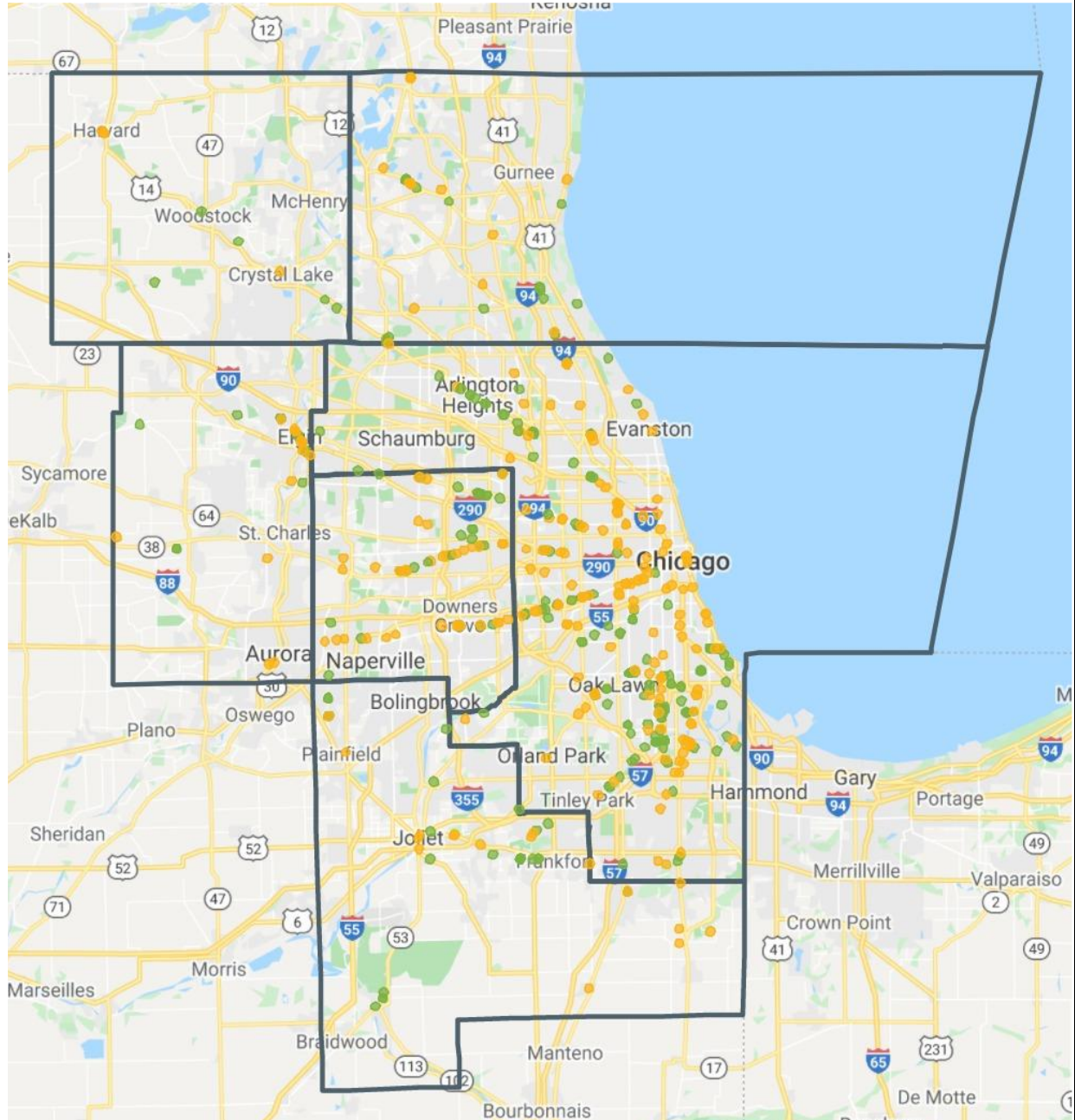
- 73% of trespassers who were injured were struck by on-track equipment. Of those, 53% were reported as on the tracks at the time of impact. Of those struck on the tracks, 34% were walking, 23% were standing, and 19% were laying down at the time of impact. Of those beside the tracks, 46% were walking at the time of impact

¹ Trespassing injuries occur when a person is injured while on private railroad property without permission. They are most often pedestrians taking a shortcut across or along tracks, but also include loiterers and those engaging in recreational activities such as hunting or jogging.

² Railroad crossing injuries are when a person or highway user is struck by a train while attempting to cross at a designated crossing where tracks intersect a roadway or walkway at the same level.



Rail-Related Injuries Within the Chicago Metro Area by Incident Type; Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will Counties, IL



● Railroad crossing injury ● Trespassing injury

The full report and other rail safety resources for families, educators and community partners can be downloaded from the Safe Kids Rail Safety Station online hub at safekids.org/RailSafetyStation.

