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## Memorandum

Date: August 30, 2018

Subject: INFORMATION: Audit Announcement | FRA's Collection and Use of Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Collision Data | Project No. 18S3005S000  
Federal Railroad Administration

From: Barry J. DeWeese   
Assistant Inspector General for Surface Transportation Audits

To: Federal Railroad Administrator

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According to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), approximately 92 percent of fatal train accidents are due to trespassing or collisions at highway-rail grade crossings. The risk of these collisions grows as highway and train traffic increase and technological advancements lead to quieter, faster trains. Since the all-time low of 1,933 in 2009, the number of collisions at grade crossings each year has ranged from 1,988 to 2,296. Both FRA and members of Congress have expressed concern about the number of collisions at highway-rail grade crossings despite long-term focus on this area. Statutes such as the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 and the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act of 2015 require States to use data-driven action plans to improve crossing safety.

Between 1996 and 2007, OIG conducted six audits of highway-rail grade crossing issues and several other audits of railroad safety issues including inspections and data collection. Given the numbers of highway-rail grade crossing accidents and fatalities and the emphasis on using data to identify improvement actions, we are initiating an audit of FRA's collection and use of highway-rail grade crossing data. Our objective is to assess FRA's collection and use of highway-rail grade crossing collision and accident investigation data to reduce grade crossing collisions.

We plan to begin the audit this month and will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference. We will conduct our work at FRA Headquarters. If you have any questions, please contact me at 202-366-5630, or Wendy Harris, Program Director, at 202-366-2794.

cc: DOT Audit Liaison, M-1  
FRA Audit Liaison, RAD-43