

# News Release

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## VPRA Recognizes Rail Safety Month

### Toolkits available with tips on rail safety

RICHMOND — The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA) is bringing rail safety to the forefront this month with a public service campaign designed to promote the importance of safety in and around trains, stations, and tracks.

The campaign kicks off today with a **Proclamation from Governor Glenn Youngkin** recognizing Rail Safety Month in Virginia. In his proclamation, the Governor emphasizes the need for rail safety by noting that Virginia ranks 19<sup>th</sup> in the nation in the number of miles of rail with 3,000 miles across the Commonwealth.

VPRA will focus on a different aspect of rail safety each week.

- Week 1 - September 1<sup>st</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> – Grade Crossing Safety
- Week 2 - September 11<sup>th</sup> through 17<sup>th</sup> – On Board Passenger Safety
- Week 3 - September 18<sup>th</sup> through 24<sup>th</sup> – Rail Safety Education
- Week 4 - September 25<sup>th</sup> through 30<sup>th</sup> – Pedestrian and Driver Safety

With toolkits -- available online at [vapassengerrailauthority.org/railsafety](http://vapassengerrailauthority.org/railsafety) – VPRA has developed messages and communications tools for use by all Virginians. These kits include everything from safety tips to sample social media and website messaging to sample school announcements, making the campaign ready for use by employers, schools, clubs, churches, and families.

"VPRA is committed to providing safe rail travel across the Commonwealth, not just on board our trains, but also in and around our stations and tracks," said **DJ Stadler, Executive Director of VPRA**. "The importance of rail safety is vital to every community as we continue to grow passenger and commuter rail service around the Commonwealth."

Operation Lifesaver, Inc., a nationally recognized leader in rail safety education is partnering with VPRA on this effort. "Trains can't stop quickly. It takes a train a mile or more to come to a complete stop," said **Tracey Lamb, Virginia Operation Lifesaver Coordinator**, emphasizing the importance of public awareness of rail safety.

In addition to toolkits, VPRA will be hosting rail safety events and promoting other educational opportunities around the Commonwealth.

To reach Virginia teens, VPRA is working with Youth of Virginia Speak Out (YOVASO) on a campaign focused on safe driving habits near railroad tracks. YOVASO is a statewide peer-to-peer education and leadership program that promotes young driver and passenger safety.

“YOVASO is excited to partner with VPRA for rail safety month. We are including rail safety education in our Drive for Change campaign that will reach hundreds of schools and youth groups throughout the Commonwealth,” stated **Mary King, YOVASO Program Administrator**. “Our peer-to-peer approach puts teens in the driver’s seat to educate their classmates about rail and highway safety and influence them to be safer drivers and passengers.”

VPRA’s partnership with YOVASO and their Drive for Change campaign will educate new drivers on the importance of buckling up, slowing down, and staying safe when walking or driving around rail tracks. Participating schools will promote rail safety in September through social media, school-wide announcements, and peer advocacy. Students are encouraged to submit a Rail Safety tagline to VPRA. The winning tagline will be the theme for 2023 Rail Safety Month and be featured in Amtrak Virginia advertising. Learn more about the Drive for Change Campaign here: [Drive for Change Campaign – YOVASO](#)

## About Virginia Passenger Rail Authority

The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority was established in 2020 to promote, sustain, and expand the availability of passenger and commuter rail service in the Commonwealth. VPRA is committed to delivering passenger rail service as an integrated, affordable, and convenient travel option and plays a critical role in mitigating current and future traffic congestion on Virginia’s highways, promoting economic development, and connecting communities by increasing passenger rail capacity, services, and ridership.

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