

**South Carolina  
Office of Regulatory Staff**

**Annual Report**

**Railroad Transportation  
Activities**

**2012**

*November 8, 2013*



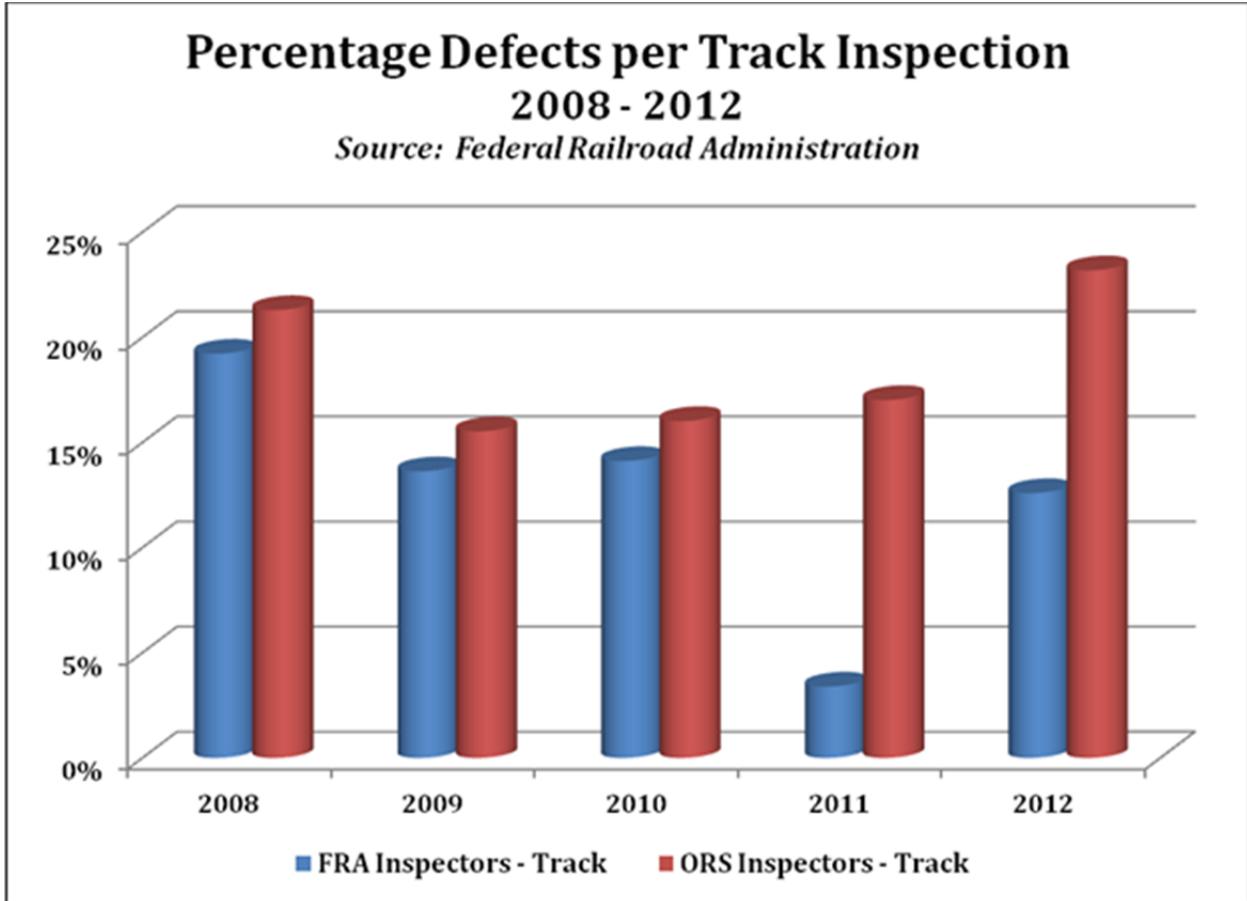
## **INTRODUCTION**

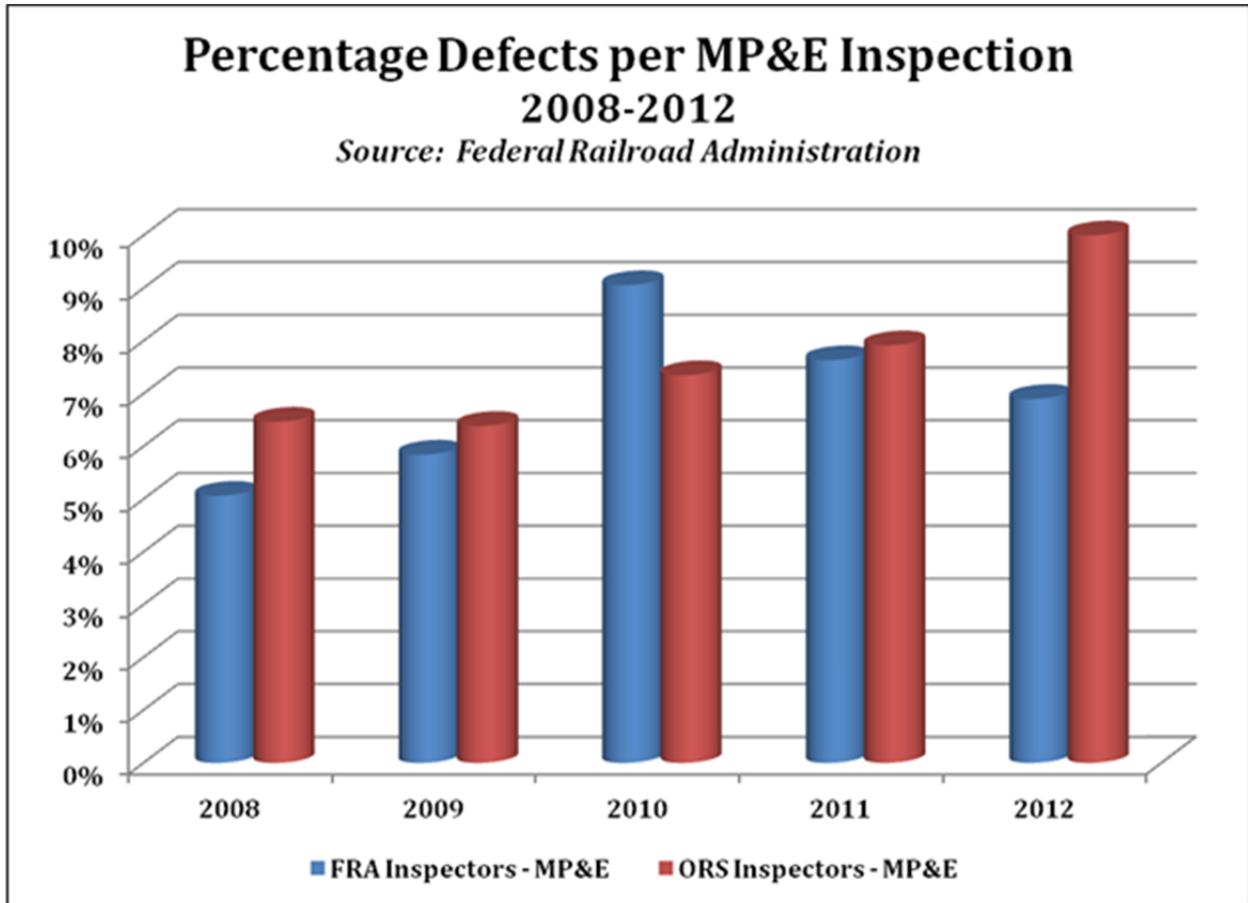
The South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff (“ORS”) has been directed by the South Carolina General Assembly (S.C. Code Ann. Section 58-17-140 as amended by 2006 Act No. 318) to compile information regarding railroad transportation activities in the State on an annual basis. In 2012, ORS shared the responsibility for railroad safety oversight with the Federal Railroad Administration (“FRA”) in two areas: 1) Track and 2) Motive Power and Equipment (“MP&E”). The FRA Track and Structures Division promoted an understanding of and compliance with the Federal Track Safety Standards and provided technical expertise of railroad safety programs relevant to track and structures. The MP&E Division promoted an understanding of and compliance with Federal standards to inspect locomotives, passenger and freight cars, air brakes, and other safety appliances. This document reports the activities of ORS related to its duties and addresses railroad accidents recorded by the FRA for South Carolina.

## **PARTNERSHIP WITH FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION**

Congress, through the Staggers Rail Act of 1980, intended to create a competitive economic environment for railroad transportation by deregulating the rates and charges of railroads. The Rail Safety Act and its amendments authorized states to work with the FRA to enforce federal railroad safety regulations. As a result of this legislation, ORS inspectors work in partnership with the FRA to provide routine compliance inspections for two FRA disciplines: 1) Track and 2) MP&E. Despite losing the MP&E inspector to retirement in September 2012, ORS was able to conduct 262 routine inspections, detected 15 safety violations, and documented 1,500 safety defects. ORS inspectors are consistently thorough in their inspections of South Carolina’s railway system which consists of approximately 2,600 miles of track. During the track inspections, ORS has discovered a higher percentage of defects per inspection than their federal counterparts for eight (8) consecutive years. The most recent five (5) years are illustrated in **Chart 1** below. For MP&E, a similar pattern has occurred as illustrated in **Chart 2**.

**CHART 1: TRACK INSPECTIONS**



**CHART 2: MOTIVE POWER AND EQUIPMENT INSPECTIONS****RAILROAD ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS IN SOUTH CAROLINA**

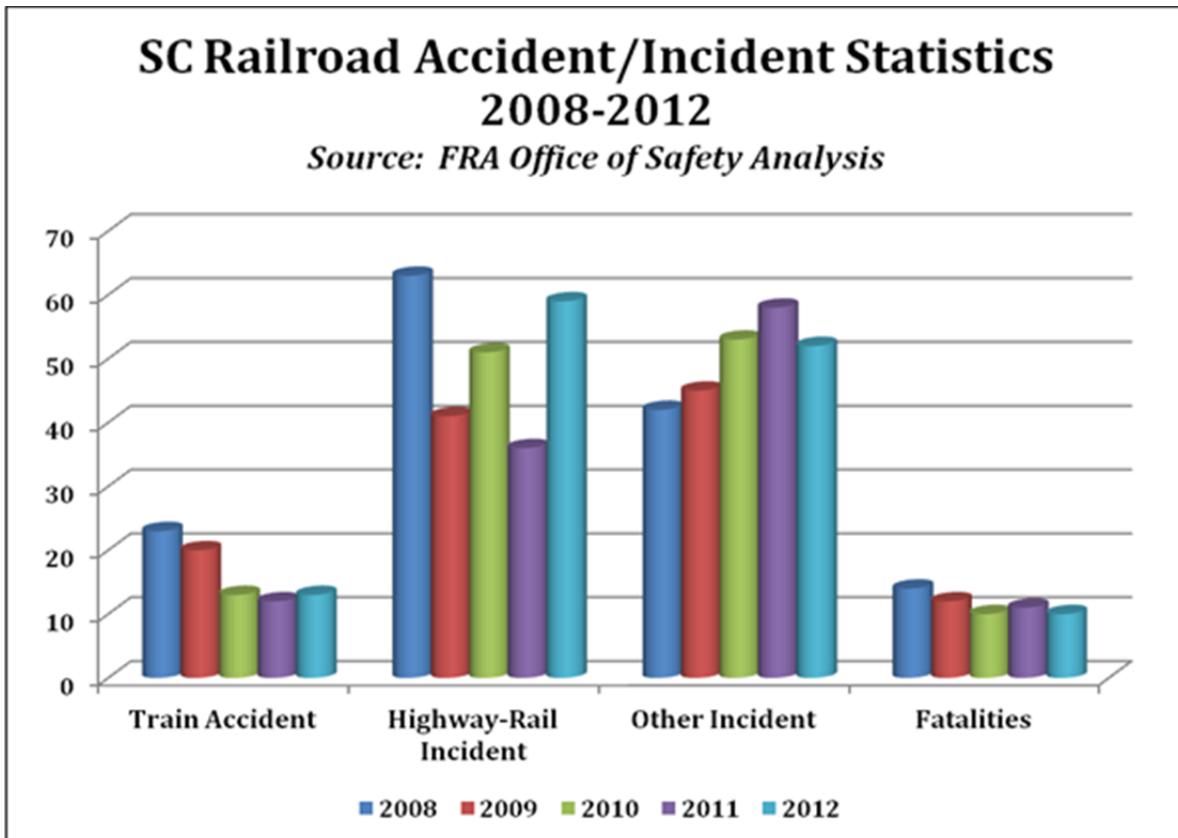
The partnership between the FRA and ORS focuses on regulatory oversight activities to promote safety in railroad operations with the goal of reducing rail-related accidents, incidents and casualties. FRA conducts formal investigations of select railroad accidents and incidents to determine the cause and identify proper remedial action. If called upon by the FRA, ORS provides a supporting role in accident/incident investigation. According to the FRA Office of Safety Analysis, 124 reportable accidents/incidents were recorded for 2012.

The FRA Office of Safety Analysis categorizes reportable accidents/incidents into three categories:

- 1 Train Accident                      An event involving on-track rail equipment that results in monetary damage to the equipment and track.
  
- 2 Highway-Rail Incidents            Any impact between a rail and highway user at a crossing site, regardless of severity. This includes motor vehicles and other highway/roadway/sidewalk users at both public and private crossings.
  
- 3 Other Incidents                      Events other than train accidents or crossing incidents, that caused death or nonfatal condition to any person. Most fatalities in this category are due to trespassing.

**Chart 3** provides a detailed breakdown of the 2008 through 2012 reportable railroad accident and incident statistics, as well as fatalities that occurred in South Carolina.

**CHART 3: RAILROAD ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT STATISTICS**



## **CONCLUSION**

In 2012, ORS monitored the South Carolina rail transportation system for compliance with federal regulations in the areas of Track and MP&E. ORS encouraged railroad operators to meet and exceed the regulations and to remedy defects and violations in a timely manner. In addition, ORS co-sponsored Operation Lifesaver to promote the three E's – education, enforcement and engineering – in order to keep people safe near railroad tracks and crossings in the State. ORS offered free railroad safety education to school children and community groups across South Carolina. In addition, ORS received State Warning Point alerts from the South Carolina Emergency Management Division related to rail incidents within the State to enable quick response to any accident/incident.

With the retirement of the MP&E inspector in 2012, ORS hired an Operating Practices inspector in mid-2013, who reviews railroads' operating rules and practices. Specifically, the inspector reviews the railroad's application of Federal alcohol and drug control programs, monitors hours of service for railroad employees involved with the movement of trains, reviews Federal locomotive engineer certification standards, occupational safety conditions and reporting, and employee training and qualification.