Railroad Company Broadband & Utility Crossing Permit Processes

The attached spreadsheet was developed by the Association of American Railroads (AAR) as part of its efforts to support the expansion of broadband access to all Americans in a safe, secure, and reliable manner. The spreadsheet is intended as a resource for our colleagues in the telecommunications and utility sectors to ensure ease of access to the necessary information from member railroads.

Safety is paramount to the railroad industry. Because railroads are regulated entities, and operate in nearly every environment and geography imaginable, certain reviews must be done and requirements met to ensure the safe installation of equipment on their property, which can include possessing adequate insurance coverage, addressing operational issues, and complying with federal safety codes and engineering standards.

In addition to these reviews, the safety policy requires the presence of a flagman who can communicate directly with train crews and dispatchers during construction to inspect for disturbed track. Without these safeguards, installations within active rail corridors can and do create safety risks to railroad employees, customers, communities, and the public.

As owners of property throughout the country, railroads currently grant permits to entities across the nation seeking access to railroad property for installation of equipment under, over, or parallel to railroad rights-of-way and tracks. Railroads are uniquely positioned to understand what lies beneath their property, and what may be planned on or near their property in the future, such as adding a second track or new industrial leads for planned development. Therefore, railroads as private companies have processes for such permits that vary, just as banks have different processes for opening a bank account.

Freight railroads understand the need for timely application review and support the efforts of our telecommunications sector partners to bring broadband to every American. It is our intent to aid in the safe installation of broadband equipment, and this spreadsheet should serve as starting point for those seeking to access railroad property.

For nearly two centuries, railroads have facilitated thousands of agreements for access to railroad property with proven processes. We look forward to working cooperatively with our partners to advance the safe and secure roll-out of broadband to the American citizen.

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN RAILROADS

Railroad Company Broadband and Utility Crossing Permit Processes

All listings and figures below are public information and available on each railroad's website under utility permitting. Not all data is directly comparable due to each railroad company being a unique business. Summaries here are provided for informational purposes and ease of reference, but please visit the individual business's website for specifics.

	BNSF	Canadian National	Canadian Pacific	CSX	G&W Railroads	Kansas City Southern	Norfolk Southern	R.J. Corman	Union Pacific
Process	**(1)** Complete Application > **(2)** Application/Review Fee Submission > **(3)** Engineering Drawings (Including Location Map, Plans, & Specifications) Submission > **(4)** Submission of Liability Insurance Documentation								
Handling Party	Jones Lang LaSalle Brokerage, Inc.	Internal @ CN	Internal @ CP	Internal @ CSX	Internal @ G&W	JLL Rail Practice Group	RailPros	Internal @ R.J. Corman	Internal @ UP
Website	BNSF.com Pipeline/Wire Line Process Instructions	CN.ca Utility Installations	CPR.ca Utility Access/Crossing Request Form	CSX.com Permitting: Utility, Wireless Infrastructure Installations & Rights of Entry	GWRR.com Utility Occupancies	KCSouthern.com Access Permits	NSCorp.com Wire, Pipeline, and Fiber Optics Projects Permitting Login	RJCorman.com Application for Wire Line Crossings	UP.com Wireline Installation Procedures for New Wireline Crossings
Design Requirements	• AREMA standards required. • Each railroad provides specific design standard guidelines for every standard type utility/facility crossing on its website. Not adhering to these guidelines can delay project execution. • Completeness and quality of engineering design plans submitted to railroads may significantly impact timelines. Submitting incomplete or incorrect plans, profiles, specifications, type, size, locations, or installation methods may require multiple review iterations and delays in the process.								
Timeline	• Generally, review for traverse crossings of railroad property can range from 4-8 weeks depending on complexity; applications and engineering plans must be complete and accurate; variance requests can increase timeline. • Once reviews are complete and the safety of the engineering plan is affirmed, the railroad will issue a permit or agreement for signature prior to commencement of construction. ***Note**: Timelines are for basic traverse crossings, but more complex crossings, like those that involve longitudinal occupancy, facilities conveying flammables, facilities under a rail bridge or an overhead structure, and other similar requests will take more time for engineering review to ensure safety.*								
Installation	Contact Roadmaster ten (10) days prior to commencing work.	Company must give CN ten (10) business days' notice before any construction.	Contact CP a minimum of ten (10) business days prior to construction to schedule access.	Use the CSX Property Portal for project scheduling.	Project scheduling accomplished through local railroad contact provided.	Applicant must contact the engineering firm Barlett & West a minimum of ten (10) days in advance of construction.	RailPros will coordinate the scheduling of the flagging and monitoring services for construction.	Contractors performing installations will be required to have an Entry Permit.	Applicant coordinates with a 3rd party flagging provider for access to the ROW to install. Flagging provider coordinates with any necessary UP personnel.

Fees & Other Costs	• Fees for crossings depend on each individual railroad and the unique circumstances of the crossing.
	• Factors include:
	  • Type of facility (wire, water pipe, gas pipe, other)
	  • Location of crossing (public vs. private property; urban vs. rural)
	  • Direction of crossing (traverse vs. longitudinal; aerial vs. subsurface)
	  • Occupation of other facilities (railroad utilities vs. foreign facilities)
	  • Operation and structure of railroad (single track vs. double or triple track; yard vs. line of road)
	  • Expansion of railroad structure for future use
	  • Insurance and liability
	  • Protection services / flagging by railroad personnel
	  • Railroad valuation maps, research, and project study								

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN RAILROADS