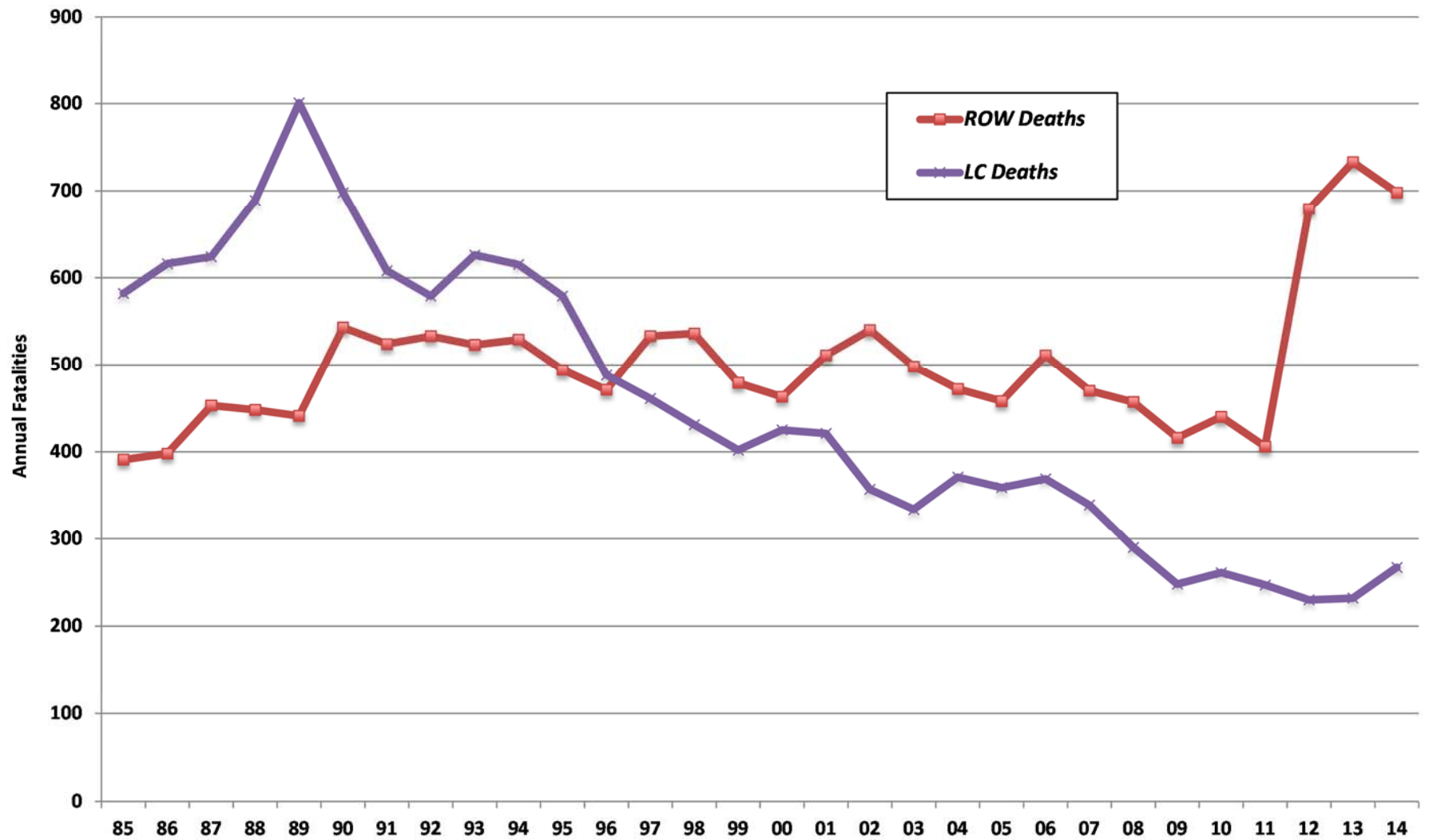
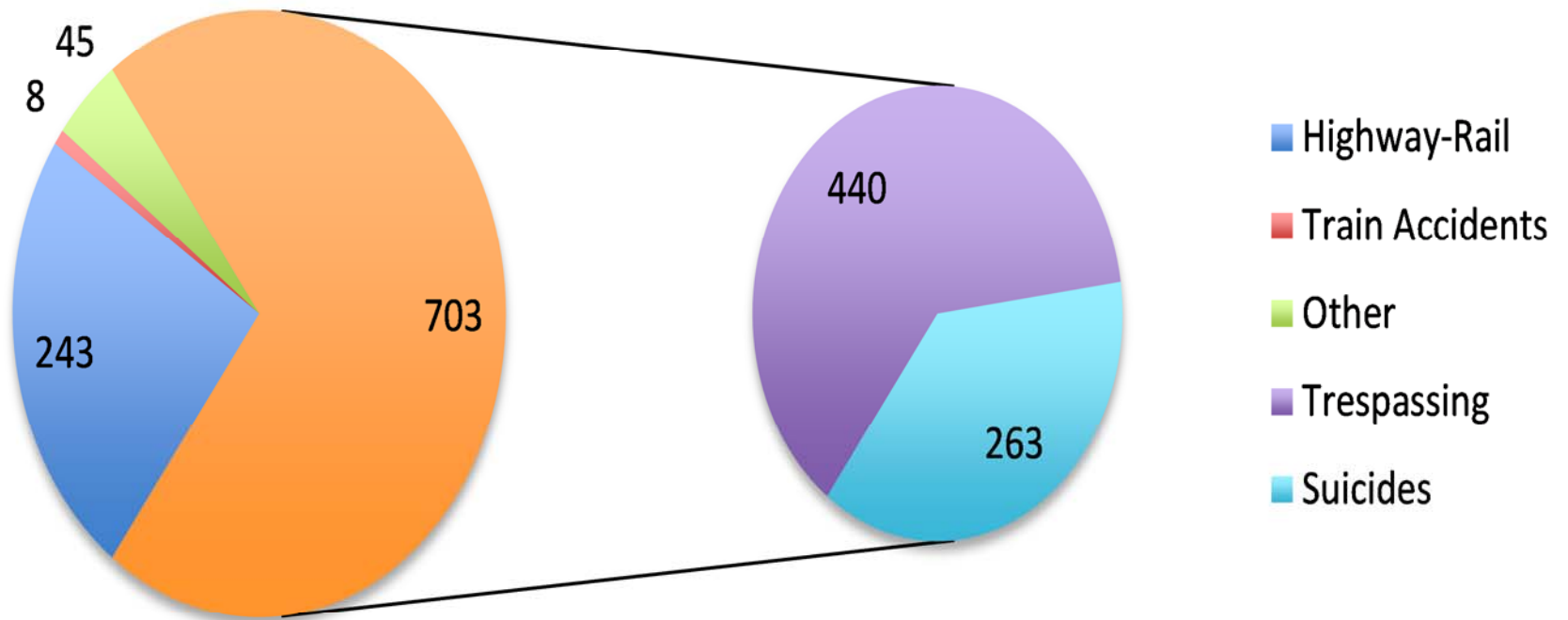


Railroad Fatality Trend Level Crossings vs Deaths along the Rails



Average Annual Railroad Deaths



Explanations of the Railroad Fatality Graphs

Figure 1: Railroad Fatality Trend

This graph shows the trend of railroad deaths that occur at highway/railroad level crossings, compared with the trend of deaths that occur along the railroad rights-of-way. (Taken together, these deaths comprise about 95% of railroad-related deaths. The remaining 5% is made up of employee deaths, train-to-train accidents, and derailments.)

Since its modern-day peak in 1989, Level Crossing deaths (LC) have decreased significantly (from around 800 to 300 per year, a decrease of about 60%). This is probably due to a number of factors, including: 1) more and better signaling devices, 2) grade separation projects (over- and under-passes), 3) the closing of crossing streets when grade separation is not feasible, and 4) better education and awareness due to efforts by the railroads, Operation Lifesaver, and state and local communities.

Rights-of-way deaths (ROW) are deaths that occur away from level crossings. ROW deaths are derived by adding the deaths due to Trespassing to those due to Suicide. This combination is legitimate, because in each case, a train hit a trespasser. Some trespassers had the intension of being struck, but are nonetheless deaths that occurred along the right-of-way. However, one is unlikely to find a total ROW fatality on the FRA website. Prior to June 2011, the FRA did not require the railroads to report a suicide fatality, if a local authority made a clear finding of suicide.

Unlike LC fatalities, ROW deaths have not decreased over the last 30 years. (The graph gives a somewhat distorted view of the recent trend, because 2012, 2013, and 2014 include Suicides. Even without suicides being counted, ROW deaths have been a larger number than LC deaths since 1997.

Figure 2. Average Annual Railroad Deaths

This graph shows the relative numbers of railroad deaths by cause for the past three years. (Prior to 2012, the Suicides number is unknown) The larger pie shows the total railroad deaths, with Right-of-Way deaths being most of the deaths (70%). The next largest number of deaths is Level Crossing deaths. Only about 5% of railroad deaths are from railroad accidents, employee accidents, and derailments, which comprise the other categories of the graph.