

Flagging & Construction Monitoring Best Practices

What is Flagging/Construction Observation in relation to Railroad Projects?

Utility Observation services focus on construction observation of parties installing utilities under railroad property using trenchless technology. On-site observers are tasked with protecting the railroad infrastructure while maintaining scheduled railroad operations during third-party utility installation or construction. The primary role of the observers is to “observe and report” on the contractor’s compliance with the construction documents, contractor activity/progress, and site conditions. Our clients trust us to know their specific standards and protect their interests. We work diligently to ensure each project is completed safely, efficiently, and on time.

Communication is key, discussions with the owner and contractor typically begin as soon as the utility agreement is issued by the Railroad. Early discussions focus on an explanation and education of costs and construction requirements. Next, Work Plans are reviewed. This step is critical and identifies over 80% of compliance problems prior to commencement of construction activities. Issues found typically relate to contractors proposing changes to preapproved plans. The goal is to work with the contractors to eliminate potential risks before any work begins on, under, or above the railroad. The Railroads field team is trained to observe and verify the utility construction and escalate any field issues for immediate correction. Safety is always the primary focus.

Who Applies for Flagging Protection Once a Permit is Received?

It is the responsibility of the Field Construction Team/Contractor performing the work onsite to schedule flaggers. The real estate permitting team is not suited to be the middle people for scheduling questions that only the field construction team/contractor can answer. The Railroad will require best contact info for those individuals onsite and to answer pertinent means/methods questions.

Instructions will be provided for the Contractor/Field to complete the flagging request process. It is important to note that each RR has a sperate flagging request process and require their own reps onsite.

What Is the Cost for RR Flagging?

Flagging fee range by company and railroad. The average daily flagging cost is about: **\$1300-1500/Day**. Some companies will also charge a mobilization fee and you can typically count on Overtime/Weekend rates to add ~\$150+/hour

Key Items to Remember When Requesting Flagging:

- Flagging requests CANNOT be expedited.
- Flagger availability is based on having a qualified representative on hand and ALL other projects ahead of yours within their job queue.
- Do not assume or proceed with mobilization onsite for work on RR ROW unless flagging protection has been 100% confirmed. It is not the Railroads responsibility to adjust or expedite their operational needs to meet proposed Ameren project schedules.

- Upfront lead time is the best way to help ensure requested dates can be confirmed and met.
- Communication is key – relay if a project is tied to a specific outage schedule or any special circumstances. Although the RR will never guarantee they can meet our timeline, some preference can be made to adjust for our benefit.
- Delays can and do sometimes happen – Once a flagger has been confirmed, occasionally that flagger cannot be released from another job that is taking excess time to complete. Railroads will do everything within their power to get our confirmed start back on track and allocate additional resources as soon as available.

What Companies Provide Flagging Protection?

While RailPros is the primary flagging resource that the majority of RR's, below is a list of firms that provide flagging services and the Railroads they are authorized to represent and estimates for the lead times in which flagging requests should be submitted prior to the proposed start date:

- Norfolk Southern (NS): **LEAD TIME – Fluctuates; currently 120 Day minimum prior to start (90 days is standard)**
 - o **RailPros:** For Scheduling of Flagging and Construction Monitoring submit a Protections Services Coordination Request online at: <https://ns.railprosp permitting.com>. For questions on the process email NS.info@RailPros.com
- Union Pacific (UP): **LEAD TIME – Fluctuates; 6 Weeks minimum prior to start**
 - o **RailPros:** Email: UP.info@railpros.com
 - Phone: 877-315-0513, ext. 116
 - o **National Railroad Safety Services:** Email: UP.request@nrssinc.net
 - Phone 877-984-6777
 - <https://www.nrssinc.net/contacts>
- Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF): **LEAD TIME – Fluctuates; 8 Weeks minimum prior to start**
 - o **Wilson & Company:** Email: wilsoncompany.utility.ic@wilsonco.com Here's the link to request for inspection and flagging services: [Request for Inspector Coordinator and RWIC Field Services Form](#)
 - o Requires pre-payment of flagging services to cover the number of days on the RR ROW
- Terminal Railroad Association (TRRA): **LEAD TIME – Fluctuates; 3 Weeks minimum prior to start**
 - o Contact information is provided below to coordinate on track safety requirements. Submit your Work Permit to TRRA at the e-mail address below. TRRA will determine if an Employee in Charge (EIC) is necessary and which company will provide such coverage. Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis, E-Mail: workpermits@terminalrailroad.com
 - o **RailPros** E-Mail: trra.info@railpros.com or Phone: 877.315.0513 Ext.116
 - o **WestBelt Railway LLC,** E-Mail: ryan.becker@patriotrail.com or Phone: 618.429.0009

- CSX Transportation: **LEAD TIME – Fluctuates; 5 Weeks minimum prior to start**
 - You must schedule your work activity through the CSX Property Portal. The link to the Portal is https://propertyportal.csx.com/pub_ps_res/ps_res/jsf/public/index.faces.
 - If you haven't already created an account, you will need to do so by selecting the Sign Up link and following the directions in the email you receive. Once signed in, select the option to Submit an Outside Party Request Form.

- CN / Illinois Central RR (ICRR): **LEAD TIME – Fluctuates; 6 Weeks minimum prior to start**
 - **RailPros:** Email: cn.info@railpros.com & US_Flagging@cn.ca
 - Phone: 248-914-9695
 - Requires pre-payment of flagging services to cover the number of days on the RR ROW

- Kansas City Southern (CPKCR): **LEAD TIME – Fluctuates; 5 Weeks minimum prior to start**
 - **Wilson & Company:** Email: cpkcr.wilsoncompany.utility.ic@wilsonco.com
 - Complete the online [KCS Request for Services Form](#)

- Indiana Railroad (INRD): **LEAD TIME – Fluctuates; 3 Weeks minimum prior to start**
 - **National Railroad Safety Services:** For Scheduling, contact NRSS Midwest District Manager: David Shepherd at Office Phone (Toll Free) (877) 984-6777, Cell (513) 617-6633, Email: dwshepherd@nrssinc.net

- Genesee & Wyoming (Tazewell & Peoria RR, Illinois Midland RR) : **LEAD TIME – Fluctuates; 4 Weeks minimum prior to start**
 - **Internal Flagging Provided:** Please contact Kelly Hedden-Saulsberry at kelly.heddensaulsberry@gwrr.com to schedule.

- Patriot Rail (Keokuk Junction RR, Decatur Junction RR, Vandalia RR): **LEAD TIME – Fluctuates; 2 Weeks minimum prior to start**
 - **Internal Flagging Provided:** Please contact mowadmin@patriotrail.com to schedule.

- MetroLink: **LEAD TIME – Fluctuates; 3 Weeks minimum prior to start**
 - **Internal Flagging Provided:** Please contact rowworkpermits@metrostlouis.org to schedule.