

Oil Trains Put Philadelphia at Risk

What Makes Oil Trains Dangerous?

Train Cars Can't Be Made Safe

Two different outdated tank car models, the DOT-111 and the CPC-1232, are still widely used. The CPC-1232 is considered an upgrade to the DOT-111. Federal standards will require using CPC-1232s by 2018 and stronger cars by 2025.

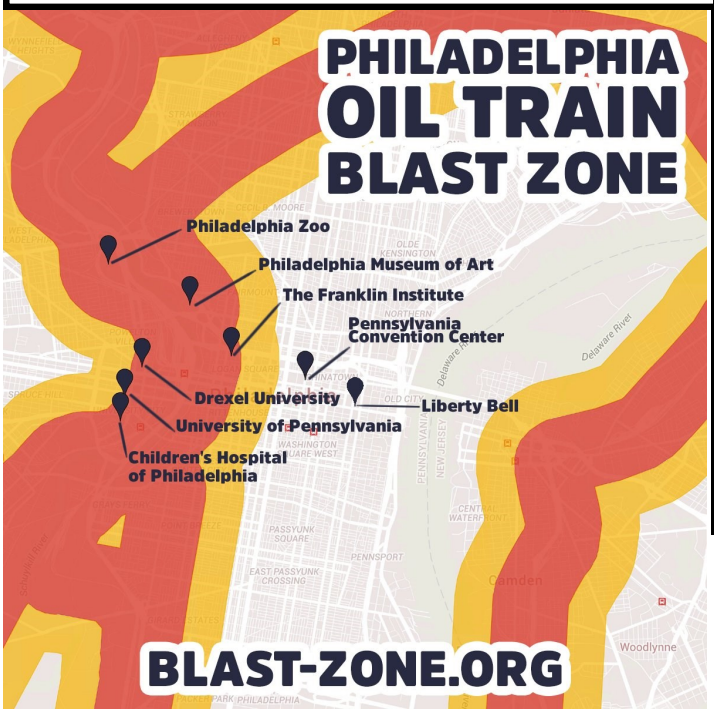
However, CPC-1232s carrying crude oil have exploded and caught fire in derailments. The puncture velocity for DOT-111 cars is only 8 mph and about 12 mph for CPC-1232s, far below their average speed. According to Karl Alexy of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), it is not possible to build a train car that will withstand puncture at 30-40 mph.

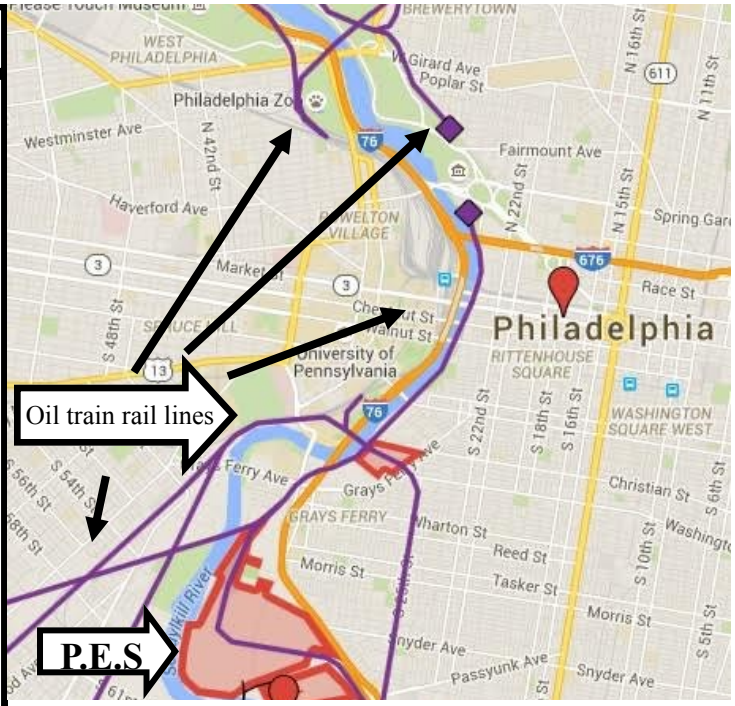
Bakken Crude Oil is More Explosive

The high vapor pressure of Bakken crude oil makes it more flammable and train cars more likely to explode in a crash. There are no federal proposals to limit vapor pressure in crude by rail.

First Responders Can't Stop Crude Oil Fires

First responders can do little in an oil train fire besides retreat and observe the fire while evacuating residents. To a large extent, first responder trainings for dealing with a fire do not make the public safer.





Oil Trains in Philadelphia

- Up to seven crude oil trains per day carry Bakken crude oil through the Philadelphia area on their way to the Philadelphia Energy Solutions refinery and other area oil refineries and terminals.
- Over 700,000 Philadelphia-area residents live within the one-mile evacuation/blast zone of a potential derailment.
- An analysis by Action United and PennEnvironment found that 58% of Philadelphians living in the blast zone are people of color. Outside of the blast zone, only 26% of residents are people of color.
- Four crude oil trains have derailed in the Philadelphia area since January 2014, two of which were inside of Philadelphia city limits.
- Even without a derailment, the trains' diesel engines and off-gassing/venting of VOCs from the trains content cause harmful air pollution and disruptive noise.

CLEAN AIR COUNCIL

Contact Coryn Wolk at cwolk@cleanair.org or (215) 567-4004 x107 to help keep Philadelphia communities safe from oil trains.