

Environmental Risk Assessment

Some time ago, the AAR commissioned a study that attempted to rank the “risk-cost” by commodity (formerly known as “Environmentally Sensitive Commodities”). This risk-cost related to the potential clean-up costs of spills resulting from derailments. Various products being transported have different characteristics in terms of their risk to health or the environment, how they move through soil and aquifers, and how difficult they are to clean up.

The AAR withdrew the original list of commodities and their risk-costs per mile, and is reworking the study. It is anticipated that a new list will be produced but this appears to be a number of months away from completion.

When the new list is available, it could initiate discussions regarding enhanced tank cars, higher freight charges, etc., for some commodities.