

Ron "Sparky" Sparks

Senior Staff Consultant



Ron "Sparky" Sparks is a Senior Staff Consultant for ESI. Prior to joining ESI, Mr. Sparks amassed over 38 years of railroad and law enforcement experience, including 24 years in railroad operations, safety, claims/litigation, and executive leadership. Mr. Sparks is considered an expert in his field and speaks nationally on the important Safety and Security issues facing the Railroad industry today.

Legal and regulatory issues that govern railroads are specialties of Mr. Sparks, who served more than 24 years as a Director of Safety, Training and Legal Affairs with Arkansas & Missouri Railroad (AMRR). Mr. Sparks developed programs to reduce the risks of injury, illness, accidents, and damage to the environment and liability to the railroad company and its subsidiaries. He developed one of the first railroad camera systems installed on locomotives, which have become standard in the industry.

Mr. Sparks previously served as a Director in Compliance and Security. He administered federal compliance training in accordance with Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) regulations, as well as the United States Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) where applicable. He is a state certified instructor at two local police academies and has taught courses in grade crossing collision investigations, firearms, and defense tactics.

As an executive leader, Mr. Sparks had operational and financial responsibility along with shared ownership of multiple AMRR policies and processes, also serving as Corporate Representative on a variety of topics related to accident investigation, claim handling, and field safety. Mr. Sparks managed the litigation analysis of multiple railroad incidents, and was the company designated expert witness in State and Federal Court cases.

Contact Information

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ESi Dallas

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Areas of Specialization

- Train Operations
- Rail Safety, Rules, and Operations
- Compliance and Security
- Accident / Incident Investigation
- Accident / Incident Case Analysis
- Claims Investigation / Evaluation / Adjudication
- Litigation Management
- Evidence Preservation
- Discovery Management / E-Discovery / Spoliation
- Executive Leadership
- Catastrophic Incident Response and Data Collection
- Root Cause Analysis
- Risk Analysis / Pre-Loss Audit
- Environmental Health and Safety

Education

Law Enforcement Management. Arkansas. 2000

Ohio Police Academy. 1985

PLE Narcotics Academy. 1985

Arkansas Police Academy. 2000

Positions Held

Engineering Systems Inc., Dallas, Texas

- Senior Staff Consultant, 2023 – Present

Arkansas & Missouri Railroad, Springdale, AR

- Director of Safety, Training and Legal Affairs, 1998-2022
- Chief – Railroad Police, 1998-2022

Continuing Education

- **BNSF Derailment Analysis and Prevention School** - Johnson County Community College, 1998
- **Traffic Crash Reconstruction Course** – Northwestern University Center for Public Safety, 2026

Professional Affiliations/Honors

American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA)

- ASLRRA Safety and Training Committee
- ASLRRA Police and Security Committee
- First Chairman of the ASLRRA Police Committee, 2005
- ASLRRA Safety Professional of the Year (out of 550 railroads), 2017

International Chiefs of Police / Arkansas Chiefs of Police

International Martial Arts Hall of Fame

- Krav Maga Law Enforcement Defense Tactics, 2012

Private Investigator License in Arkansas and Florida

Project Experience

Investigations

Derailment Investigations

- Numerous investigations on the cause and prevention of derailments.

F.E.L.A. Investigations

- Analyzed rail employee claims of on-the-job injuries that fall under F.E.L.A.
- Assisted with developing legal strategies for clients to mitigate or eliminate damages.

Grade Crossing Collision Investigations (GCCl)

- Investigated numerous GCCl claims against the railroad and prepared a legal strategy for clients.

Trespasser Investigations / Third-Party Investigations

- Investigated claims brought against the railroad and utilized evidence gathered to mitigate or eliminate claims.

Presentations

"Investigating Grade Crossing Collisions: The Railroad's Perspective," **R. Sparks**, Presenter, 29th Annual Railroad Liability Seminar, Chattanooga, TN, June 2024.

"Accident Investigations: Where to Begin," **R. Sparks**, Presenter, American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association Annual Convention, Kansas City, MO, March 2024.

"Tragedy At The Crossing," written and directed by **R. Sparks**, a grade crossing accident involving multiple van occupants and used for mass casualty training purposes by various organizations.

"Homeland Security Exercise," written and directed by **R. Sparks**, a training exercise involving a hostage situation on a passenger train used for training purposes by various organizations.