

Safety Bulletin

Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety and Railroad Trespassing Tips



- Trains cannot stop quickly. A 100-car freight train traveling at 55 miles per hour will typically need more than a mile to stop — that's approximately 18 football fields; once emergency brakes have been applied.
- Modern trains are quieter than ever, and frequently operate over "ribbons of rail" without the telltale "clackety-clack" of jointed rail.
- Do not be fooled — the train you see is closer and moving faster than you think. The size and mass of trains create an optical illusion that can fool your senses. If you see a train approaching, wait for it to pass before you proceed cross the tracks.
- Never race a train to the crossing — even if you tie, you lose.
- Never drive around lowered gates — it's illegal and deadly. If you suspect a warning device like a gate arm is malfunctioning, call the 1-800 phone number posted on or near the crossing or local law enforcement.
- Do not get stuck on the tracks. Only proceed over a highway-rail grade crossing if you are sure you can completely clear the crossing without stopping. If traffic is backed up on the other side of the crossing, do not proceed over the tracks.
- If your vehicle stalls on a track while a train's coming, get everyone out on the vehicle immediately and move quickly away from the tracks in the direction the train is coming from. If move in the same direction the train is traveling, you could be injured by flying debris from the impact on your car.
- At a grade crossing with multiple tracks, always wait for a moving train to pass, and watch out for a second train on the other tracks, approaching from either direction.
- A train may extend three feet or more outside the steel rail, which makes the safety zone for pedestrians well beyond the rails themselves.
- Cross tracks ONLY at designated pedestrian or roadway crossings. Observe and obey all warning signs and signals.
- Never walk down a train track; it's illegal and it's dangerous. By the time a locomotive engineer can see a person or a vehicle on the tracks, it is too late. The train cannot stop quickly enough to avoid a collision.
- Train tracks are private property, no matter which railroad owns them. Trains have the right of way 100% of the time — over ambulances, fire engines, cars, the police and pedestrians.