Information and key safety tips at highway-rail grade crossings.

OPERATION LIFESAVER

See Tracks? THINK TRAIN

IllinoisRailSafetyWeek.org

Illinois Rail Safety Week
September 14th – 20th

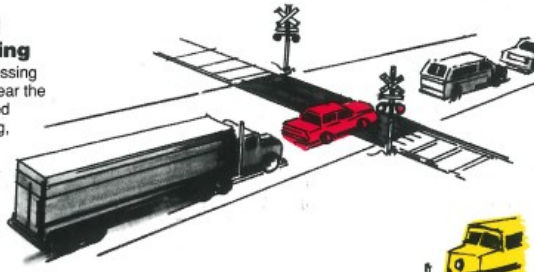
Safety Tips

Expect A Train On Any Track At Any Time

Most trains do not travel on a regular schedule. Be cautious at a grade crossing at any time of the day or night.

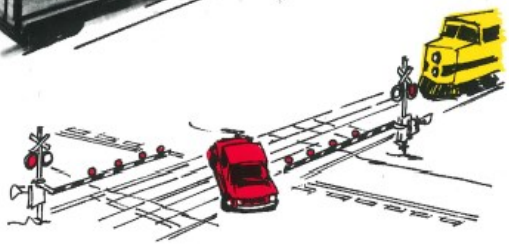
Don't Get Trapped On A Grade Crossing

Never drive onto a grade crossing until you are sure you can clear the tracks. Once you have started across the tracks, keep going, especially if you see a train approaching.



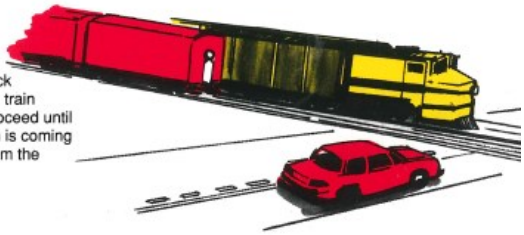
Never Drive Around The Gates

If the gates are down, stop and stay in place. Do not cross the tracks until the gates are raised and the lights have stopped flashing.



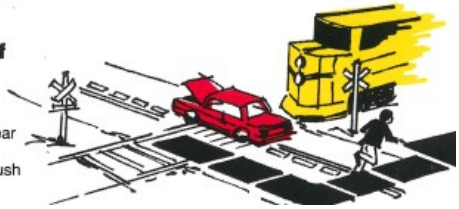
Watch Out For The Second Train

When you are at a multiple track crossing and the last car of the train passes the crossing, do not proceed until you are sure that no other train is coming on another track, especially from the opposite direction.



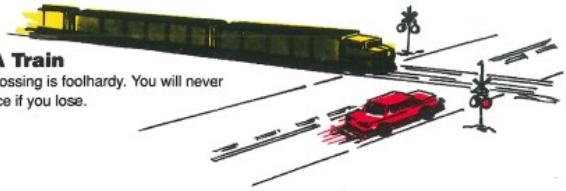
Get Out Of Your Vehicle If It Stalls

If your vehicle stalls on a crossing, get everyone out and off the tracks immediately. If a train is coming, stay clear of the tracks. If no train is in sight, post lookouts and try to start the vehicle or push it off of the tracks.



Never Race A Train

Racing a train to a crossing is foolhardy. You will never have a second chance if you lose.

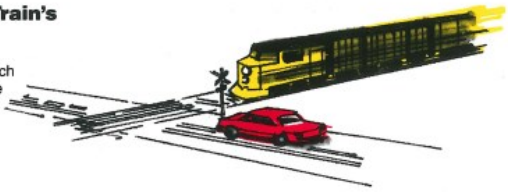


Watch For Vehicles That Must Stop At Highway-Rail Grade Crossings

Be prepared to stop when you are following buses or trucks that are required to stop at highway-rail grade crossings.

Don't Misjudge The Train's Speed and Distance

Because of the large size of a train, it appears to be moving much slower than you think. If you have any doubts, stop and wait for the train to pass.



Preventing highway-rail grade crossing crashes is up to you!

Trains Can't Stop Quickly... You Can

Stopping Distances For The Average Freight Train

Warning Devices

Public highway-rail grade crossings have been marked with one or more of the following warning devices for your safety by both state highway departments and the railroad companies. Learn what they are and watch for them. With these warning devices, and caution on your part, highway-rail grade crossing crashes should never happen.

Advance Warning Signs

Advance warning signs mean a highway-rail grade crossing is ahead and are located at a sufficient distance to allow you to stop (if necessary) before reaching the crossing.

Pavement Markings

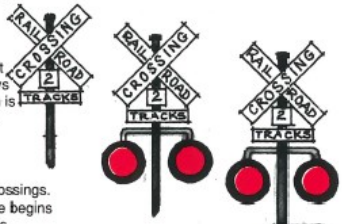
Pavement markings, consisting of a R X R and a stop line, may be painted on the pavement in front of a crossing. Always stay behind the painted stop line while waiting for a passing train.

Railroad Crossbuck Signs

Railroad crossbuck signs are found at most public crossings. These signs should be treated the same as a yield sign. The driver should slow down and be prepared to stop upon sighting a train. If there is more than one track, a sign below the crossbuck indicates the number of tracks at this crossing.

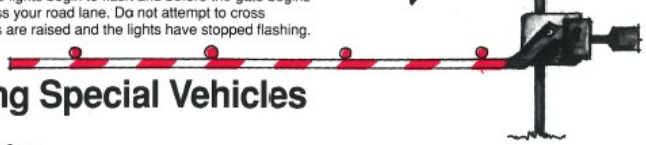
Flashing Light Signals

Flashing light signals are used with crossbuck signs at many highway-rail crossings railroad crossings. Always stop when the lights begin to flash. This means a train is coming. If there is more than one track, make sure all tracks are clear before crossing.



Gates

Gates are used with flashing light signals at certain crossings. Stop when the lights begin to flash and before the gate begins to lower across your road lane. Do not attempt to cross until the gates are raised and the lights have stopped flashing.



Driving Special Vehicles

Motorcycles

Motorcycles should approach all highway-rail grade crossings slowly and then cross the tracks at as nearly a 90 degree angle as possible, as well as following all other guidelines in this bulletin.

School Buses and Commercial Buses

School buses and buses carrying passengers for hire are required to stop at all grade crossings in most states. The driver must check both directions for approaching trains and then proceed only when it's clearly safe to do so, selecting a gear that will not require a change of gears until the tracks have been crossed, and never changing gears while crossing the tracks.

Trucks Carrying Hazardous Materials

Trucks carrying hazardous materials are also required to stop at all grade crossings. Drivers should come to a gradual stop (to minimize the possibility of causing another driver to have an accident), and never change gears while crossing the tracks. Wherever possible reroute away from grade crossings OR use a grade crossing equipped with flashing lights or gates.

Be Especially Watchful At Night For Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Warning Signs

At night it is particularly difficult to judge speed and distance. If you have any doubts, it is always better to be overly cautious than sorry.

Illinois Department of Transportation