

Railroad Crossing Safety

FACTS AND FIGURES:

- ✚ A vehicle train crash occurs about every ninety (90) minutes
- ✚ Two motorists are killed daily in vehicle-train crashes
- ✚ A motorist is 30 times more likely to die in a vehicle-train crash than in other motor vehicle accidents
- ✚ More people die in highway-rail crashes each year than in airplane crashes
- ✚ Over fifty (50) percent of grade crossing crashes occur at crossings where active warning devices exist.
- ✚ Most vehicle-train crashes occur at grade crossings within twenty-five (25) miles of the motorists home

WARNING SIGNS AND DEVICES:

Public highway-rail grade crossings are places where the roadway crosses the train tracks. They are highway-rail intersections. State highway departments and railroad companies have marked them, for your safety, with one or more of the following warning devices. Learn what they are and watch for them. These warning devices advise you the road crosses train tracks. They alert you to the possible presence of t train.

- ✚ Advance Warning signs:



- The Advance Warning sign is usually the first sign you see when approaching a highway-rail intersection. It is located a sufficient distance ahead to allow a driver to stop before reaching the crossing. The Advance Warning sign advises you to slow down, look and listen for the train, and be prepared to stop if a train is approaching

- ✚ Pavement markings:



- Pavement Markings, consisting of an R X R followed by a Stop Line closer to the tracks, may be painted on the paved approach to a crossing. Stay behind the Stop Line while waiting for a train to pass

✚ Crossbuck Signs:



- Crossbuck signs are found at highway-rail intersections. They are yield signs. You are legally required to yield the right of way to trains. Slow down, look and listen for the train, and stop if a train approaches. When the road crosses over more than one set of tracks, a sign below the Crossbuck indicates the number of tracks.

✚ Flashing Red Light Signals:



- At many highway-rail grade crossings, the Crossbuck sign has flashing red lights and bells. When the lights begin to flash, STOP! A train is approaching. You are legally required to yield the right of way to the train. If there is more than one track, make sure all tracks are clear before crossing

✚ Gates:



A Long Arm Gate extends over 3/4 of the roadway.

- Many crossings have gates with flashing red lights and bells. Stop when the lights begin to flash and before the gate lowers across your road lane. Remain stopped until the gates go up and the lights have stopped flashing. Proceed when it is safe.

OTHER SPECIAL VEHICLE RELATED TIPS:

*Town of Menasha Fire Department
Public Education: Our first line of defense*

- ✚ Motorcycles:
 - In addition to following all other guidelines, motorcyclists should approach all highway-rail intersections very slowly. Be alert to the possibility of a rough crossing. Always cross the tracks at as nearly a 90 degree angle as possible.
- ✚ School Buses and Commercial Buses:
 - In most states, school buses and commercial buses are required to stop at every highway-rail grade crossing. The driver must look and listen for trains approaching from both directions, and cross only when it is safe to do so. Before crossing be sure there is enough space to clear the tracks on the other side if a stop becomes necessary and never change gears while crossing.
- ✚ Hazardous Materials:
 - Federal regulations and the laws of most states require trucks carrying hazardous materials to stop at all highway-rail grade crossings. Stop gradually to avoid being rear-ended. Never change gears while crossing the tracks. Wherever possible, use roads where railroad crossings are equipped with flashing red lights or gates.

SAFETY TIPS:

- ✚ Freight trains do not travel on a predictable schedule. Schedules for passenger trains change as well. Always expect a train at every highway-rail intersection
- ✚ Do not get trapped on a highway-rail crossing. Never drive onto a railroad crossing until you are sure you can clear the tracks on the other side without stopping.
- ✚ If the gates are down, the road is closed. Stop and wait until the gates go up and the red lights stop flashing.
- ✚ When you are at a multiple-track crossing and the last car of the closest train passes by, stay alert. Before crossing, look and listen carefully for another train on another track, coming from either direction.
- ✚ If your vehicle stalls at the highway-rail intersection, get everyone out and far away from the tracks immediately. Then, call 911 to report the emergency situation.
- ✚ Racing a train to a highway-rail intersection is a fool's game. If you lose, you may never have a second chance.
- ✚ You cannot accurately judge a train's speed or distance. Do not take chances. An optical illusion makes a train seem further away and moving more slowly than it is. Do not take chances!
- ✚ After fully applying the brakes, a loaded freight train traveling fifty-five (55) miles per hour takes a mile or more to stop. An eight (8) car passenger train traveling eighty (80) miles per hour requires about a mile to stop as well.