



Crossing Railroads Safely

About every three hours, a person or vehicle is hit by a train in the United States, often with fatal results.

These statistics trigger the need to review safety precautions that drivers must follow when approaching and crossing train tracks.

Safety Tips for Drivers

- Approach the tracks cautiously, and always expect a train – even on rarely used tracks. Since most trains do not travel on a regular schedule, be cautious any time of the day or night.
- Turn on your four-way flashers to warn other drivers that you are slowing down.
- Then, turn off any fans and music, and roll down your windows as you come to the track. Try to come to a complete stop between 15 and 50 feet away.
- Cross tracks only at designated crossings. Never drive around lowered gates. This is illegal and deadly.
- Once you are stopped, listen for a train and look both ways down the track. Be mindful that your mirrors or A-pillars may be blocking your view so adjust your body to see around them. Listen for any signs of a train even if you cannot see one. If you do not see or hear anything, look again and proceed. Use the highest gear without having to shift to get across.
- If you are crossing the tracks and you see a train coming, keep going. Do not panic and stop on the tracks. Remember, the train is at least three feet wider than the tracks on each side.
- If you see a train, understand that it is closer and moving faster than you think. Always wait for it to pass before proceeding across the tracks.

What if You Get Stuck?

If your vehicle stalls or gets stuck on the tracks, do the following:

- Get yourself and any other passengers out of the vehicle immediately.
- If a train is coming, get out immediately and move quickly toward the oncoming train and away from the tracks at a 45-degree angle. This is to protect you if the train does hit your vehicle. The debris will fly in the same direction as the train's path.
- If you are at a crossing with multiple tracks, watch in either direction for another train approaching.
- Once you are far enough away from the tracks, call for help and provide your location and the crossing number if it is posted. Be aware that trains cannot stop quickly. A train traveling at 60 mph will need at least one mile to stop, so even if the train driver sees you, it's not likely that they will be able to stop in time.