



RAIL
CROSSING
ROAD

DAN HARE

GENERAL RAIL SAFETY INFORMATION

Facts and safety tips:

Freight trains do not travel on a predictable schedule; schedules for passenger trains change. Always expect a train at every highway-rail intersection.

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.

If there are rails on the railroad ties, assume that the track is in use, even if there are weeds or the track looks “rusty.”

A typical locomotive weighs approximately 400,000 pounds or 200 tons. When 100 railcars are added to the locomotive, the train can weigh approximately 6,000 tons. The weight ratio of an automobile to a train is proportional to a soda can and an automobile.

A train may extend three feet or more outside the steel rail, which makes the safety zone for pedestrians well beyond the rails themselves.

Trains cannot stop quickly. It is a simple law of physics: the huge weight and size of the train and the speed of the train dictate how quickly it can stop under ideal conditions. A 100-car freight train traveling at 55 miles per hour will need more than a mile to stop — that’s approximately 18 football fields — once the train is set into emergency braking.

There are approximately 140,000 miles of railroad tracks in the United States (source: Association of American Railroads, 2006).

Trains can move in either direction at any time. Trains are sometimes pushed by locomotives instead of being pulled. This is especially true in commuter and light rail passenger service.

Modern trains are quieter than ever, with no telltale “clackety-clack.” Also, an approaching train will always be closer and moving faster than you think.

Quick tips for pedestrian rail safety:

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 trespasser or a vehicle on the tracks, it is too late. The train cannot stop quickly enough to avoid a collision.

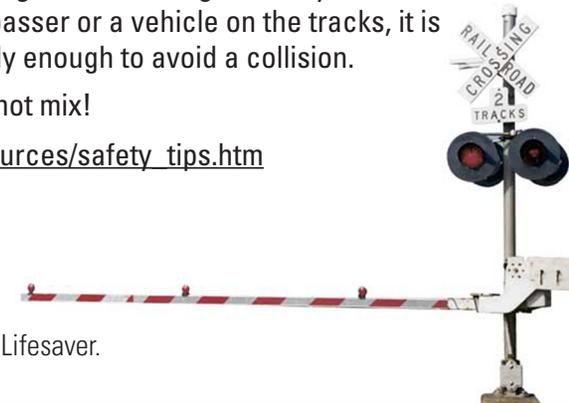
Remember: Rails and recreation do not mix!

http://www.oli.org/education_resources/safety_tips.htm



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