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TRAIN AND TRACK SAFETY: SIGNS & SIGNALS

A highway-rail grade crossing is considered an intersection, just like where streets cross. Some crossings are marked with signs that tell drivers and walkers the road ahead crosses the railroad tracks. Highway-rail grade crossings that don't have lights and gates are called "passive" crossings because there are no devices that activate when a train approaches. Some crossings have flashing lights, bells and other electric devices that warn of an approaching train. These are called "active" crossings because they involve devices that respond to an approaching train and actively warn drivers and walkers.

Passive signs you may see before you get to a crossing



Yellow circular **Advance Warning** sign. This sign warns drivers that the road crosses the railroad tracks ahead. When drivers see this sign, it reminds them to slow down, look and listen for a train and be prepared to stop if a train is approaching.



Watch for **pavement markings** on the road, near the yellow circular Advance Warning signs, which also alert drivers that the road crosses railroad tracks ahead.



On paved roads, a **stop line** may be painted across the lane to mark the safe place to stop and look for an approaching train. On unpaved roads there are no pavement markings or stop lines, and the driver must stop behind the crossbuck sign (see below) or signal at the crossing. If there is no stop line, the driver must stop no closer than 15 feet and no farther than 50 feet from the nearest rail.



The yellow diamond-shaped **parallel track sign** identifies highway-rail intersections that appear immediately after making either a right or left turn.

Passive signs at railroad crossings



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The **Crossbuck** sign is required at all crossings. It has two crossed white boards showing the words RAILROAD CROSSING and should be considered the same as a YIELD sign. You must yield to the train.



Check just below the crossed boards of the Crossbuck to see if there is a sign showing the number of tracks at the crossing. If there is more than one track, that sign will be present. After one train has passed, look and listen in case another train is coming from either direction.



STOP and YIELD signs at the crossing have the same meaning as they do at other intersections. Drivers must always stop at the STOP sign in advance of the railroad tracks, and every driver must yield the right of way to a train.



The **DO NOT STOP ON TRACKS** sign reminds the driver not to stop on the railroad tracks for any reason.

NO TRESPASSING Signs

NO TRESPASSING signs often are posted at bridges, tunnels, trestles, railroad rights-of-way, and railroad yards. Whether there is a "No Trespassing" sign or not, people who walk on or near the tracks, on a bridge or in a tunnel can be arrested and fined. Trespassing puts them in serious danger.

Active Signs At Railroad Crossings



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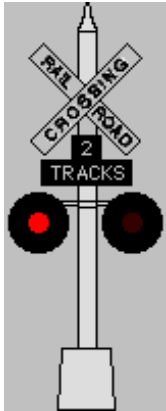
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Flashing red lights, with bells and gates, are used to warn the driver and pedestrian when a train approaches. It's illegal to go around the gates. Also, ignoring warning devices and going around the gates makes the driver legally liable for any deaths, injuries, or damage to property if a collision occurs. At a crossing with active signs: 1) Stop and wait for the gate to go up. 2) Stop at flashing lights and proceed only if a train is not visible.

Acknowledgments:

[Operation Lifesaver, Inc.](#)

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