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## TRAIN AND TRACK SAFETY: BASIC SAFETY TIPS AT HIGHWAY-RAIL CROSSINGS

### **Expect a train at any time.**

You can't be sure when a train may appear at a crossing, even if it's one you drive or walk across every day. Freight trains don't travel on a regular schedule and the schedules for passenger trains can change. Always be alert, because trains can run any time of day or night, on any track, in any direction.

### **Don't be fooled: the train is closer and faster than you think!**

In the same way that airplanes can seem to move slowly, your eyes can play a trick on you when a train is approaching. It's an optical illusion that makes a train seem farther away and moving more slowly than it really is. Don't take chances. It's easy to misjudge a train's speed and its distance, especially at night. If you see a train, just wait.

### **Trains can't stop quickly or swerve, be prepared to yield.**

After fully applying the brakes, a loaded freight train traveling 55 miles an hour takes a mile or more to stop. A light rail train can take 600 feet to stop, and an 8-car passenger train traveling 80 miles an hour needs about a mile to stop. Even if the engineer can see you, it's too late to stop the train in time to prevent a collision.

### **Stop and wait when gates are down or lights are flashing.**

If the gates are down, the road is closed and you must stop and wait; that's the law. Continue across after the gates go up and the red lights stop flashing.

### **Check all tracks before crossing.**

If you're at a crossing with more than one set of tracks, be very careful after a train passes. Before you begin to cross, be sure that another train isn't coming on another track from a different direction; the first train can hide the second train.

### **Don't get trapped on the tracks.**



Never drive onto a railroad crossing until you're sure you can clear the tracks on the other side without stopping. If your car stalls or is trapped on the tracks, get everyone out right away, even if you don't see a train coming. Move quickly away from the tracks. If a train is coming, move in its direction as you move away from the tracks. If you run the same direction the train is going, you could be injured by flying debris when the train hits your car. When you're at a safe distance from the crossing, call 9-1-1 or the railroad emergency number posted

at the crossing.



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### **Don't trespass on foot.**

Tracks and the property alongside them (the right of way) are private property. Stay off railroad cars and tracks. Don't trespass. It's illegal and too often it's deadly.

#### **Acknowledgments:**

[Operation Lifesaver, Inc.](#)

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