

Rail Safety Guide for Law Enforcement



Keeping Railroads and the Public Safe

The mission of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is: To enable the safe, reliable and efficient movement of people and goods for a strong America, now and in the future.



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

Rail Safety Tips

- 1. Never drive along railroad tracks.** When parking, keep your cruiser at least 50 feet away from the nearest rail. Additionally, do not attempt to stop a train by parking on the tracks. Position the cruiser adjacent to the crossing with your emergency lights flashing. A train traveling 55 mph can take more than a mile to stop, so a train crew will not be able to prevent a collision without prior notice.
- 2. Stop, check both directions, and listen** before stepping onto the tracks. Remember trains can come at any time and from either direction.
- 3. Wear high visibility apparel** when your work requires you to be on or near railroad tracks.
- 4. Proceed with caution** when stepping onto the tracks and never walk between or underneath train cars.



Enforcement Saves Lives

1. **Take 10, Save a Life**

FRA encourages law enforcement officers to make their presence known at grade crossings. Take 10 minutes to fill out paperwork or make phone calls while monitoring a crossing. Ten minutes of your time could save someone's life!

2. **Write Citations**

Strong enforcement programs have proven to be highly successful in changing driver behavior. If you see a vehicle driving around railroad crossing gates or ignoring warning signs, take time to educate them on railroad safety and write them a citation.



Proactive Measures

1. **Create** a contact list for each railroad that operates in your area of jurisdiction.
2. **Engage** local rail companies in formulating effective response procedures.
3. **Know** in advance the proper procedures for stopping a train in an emergency situation. First, locate the Emergency Notification Sign (ENS) and contact the railroad dispatcher by calling the number listed. Next, position an officer at least one mile away from the incident. Have him/her stand 10 feet from the tracks and wave a red flare back and forth to signal the approaching train.
4. **Notify** railroad companies when work requires you to be on or near railroad property to ensure that rail traffic is stopped. Let them know when police activity is complete and all personnel have cleared the area.



In Case of Emergency

1. **Locate** the blue and white Emergency Notification Sign (ENS) at the nearest grade crossing. This sign provides the railroad's telephone number and the U.S. DOT grade crossing number.
2. **Communicate** your location and intentions to the railroad and keep your dispatcher informed at all times. A train can move in either direction, on any track, at any time. Ensure that the railroad is aware of your presence on their property at all times.
3. **Collaborate** with the train crew in the event of an emergency. Keep in mind that the train crew may be suffering physical injuries as well as emotional distress from the incident. Railroad engineers may not carry a driver's license since it is not required to operate a train.
4. **Consider** nearby highway-rail grade crossings when rerouting traffic in emergency situations. FRA recommends that, when an accident or road closure results in increased traffic near a grade crossing, additional signage and/or a law enforcement officer be placed at that location.

More Resources

FRA created the "[I am a Law Enforcement Officer/Emergency Responder](http://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P0850)" webpage " (<http://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P0850>) to educate professionals on railroad safety.

For more information visit us at
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