

Lifesaving Tips for Media

When working around trains and railroad property

P R O V I D E D I N T H E I N T E R E S T O F S A F E T Y

When your job takes you near the railroad tracks, here are some tips that could improve your story and possibly even save your life. Be aware of the potential danger when working around trains and railroad property.

Please do not stand on or near the tracks while you're reporting. It can take a train a mile or more to stop in emergency braking. If you're standing in the gauge, there's no guarantee the train will be able to stop for you.

If you are covering a serious collision, police perimeters may be established to protect you and the public. All rail traffic may not stop simultaneously on other tracks. So it's vital for you to stay away from any tracks - or there may be a second tragedy.

SAFETY BRIEFS

The average train overhangs the track by at least three feet. Stay back, away from the tracks. Wider loads can extend even further from the tracks. So stand back 15 feet or more from the tracks to avoid debris or being hit by the train itself.

Railroad tracks, trestles, yards and rights-of-way are private property. For your safety and to avoid misunderstandings, contact the railroad (or call Operation Lifesaver to help you identify the appropriate person) if you want to work on railroad property.

Why is it hard to determine a train's distance from you and its speed? Similar to an airplane traveling at 150 mph that appears to float onto the runway, an on-coming train is actually moving faster and is closer to you than it appears.

Why can't the train just stop to avoid people/vehicles on the tracks? It can take a mile or more to stop a train traveling at 55 mph because of its weight and mass. Other vehicles are able to stop much quicker and are required to follow the signs and signals at the crossing.

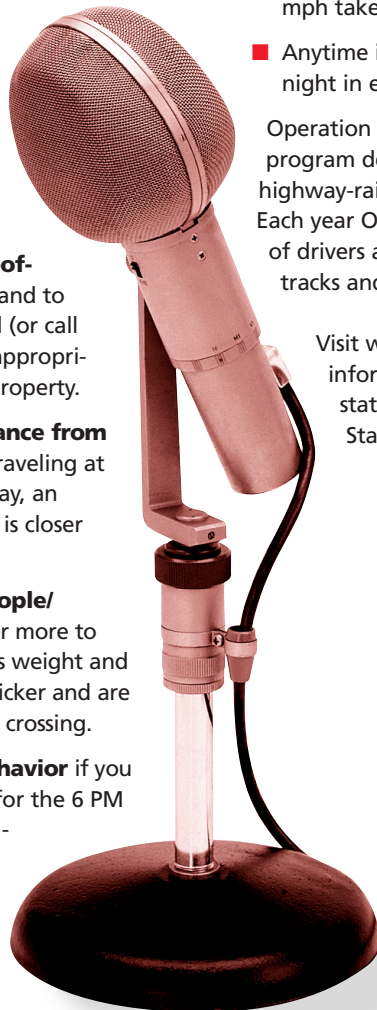
People in your community mimic your behavior if you do a stand-up report from between the rails for the 6 PM news. People in the community, including children, may decide it's okay to be on the tracks because of your example. This sends the wrong message and risks both your life and theirs.

RAIL SAFETY FACTS

- Approximately every three hours in the United States, either a vehicle or a pedestrian is involved in a collision with a train.
- Nearly 50 percent of vehicle/train collisions occur at crossings with active warning devices (gates, lights, and/or bells).
- A motorist is 20 times more likely to die in a crash involving a train than in a collision involving another motor vehicle.
- On average, more people die in highway-rail grade crossing crashes in the United States each year than in all commercial and general aviation crashes combined.
- Trains cannot stop quickly. The average train traveling at 55 mph takes a mile or more to stop. That's 18 football fields.
- Anytime is train time! Trains travel at all hours of the day or night in either direction.

Operation Lifesaver is a national, non-profit, public education program dedicated to ending collisions, deaths and injuries at highway-rail grade crossings and along railroad rights-of-way. Each year Operation Lifesaver's 3,000 Presenters teach millions of drivers and pedestrians how to make safe decisions around tracks and trains.

Visit www.oli.org or call 1-800-537-6224 to get contact information for your state's coordinator and to receive statistics, key contact information and story ideas. Statistics are from the Federal Railroad Administration.



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