

Railroad Crossing Tips for Equestrians



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

Operation Lifesaver, Inc. (OLI) and USRider Equestrian Motor Plan remind equestrians and drivers of vehicles pulling horse trailers to be especially cautious around railroad tracks and trains.

INFORMATION FOR TOWING HORSE TRAILERS:

Recent research into 200 horse trailers incidents showed an inordinate number involving gooseneck horse trailers becoming stuck on railroad crossings. Nearly all of these incidents resulted in loss of human and equine life. To avoid tragedy, remember the following guidelines.

IF YOU SEE A TRAIN COMING, WAIT!

- Don't be tempted to try to beat a train. An approaching train may be closer and traveling faster than it appears.
- A vehicle pulling a horse trailer may take more time to clear a crossing than you anticipated.
- Trains cannot stop quickly. The average freight train traveling at 55 miles per hour takes a mile or more to stop. That's 18 football fields. If the locomotive engineer can see you, it's too late to stop the train.
- At multiple track crossings, the number of tracks will be shown. Your view of a second train may be blocked by the first. Do not proceed until you can see clearly in both directions.

DON'T GET STUCK ON THE TRACK!

- Low-clearance equipment can get stuck on "humped" crossings, where tracks are higher than the road grade. Assume the warning sign before a railroad track is meant for you. Find an alternate route!
- Before you cross, be sure there is room on the other side for your trailer to completely clear the tracks without stopping. Trains overhang tracks by at least 3 feet on both sides. For safety, leave at least 15 feet between your trailer and the nearest rail.
- Be especially careful if you must travel across a private access farm-rail crossing that is not equipped with warning signs, lights, bells or gates.
- Never stop on tracks to open or close gates!



DON'T LOSE YOUR LOAD OR A LIFE!

- Check hitch pins to ensure they cannot dislodge while crossing railroad tracks.
- Secure loads inside the trailer so materials are not dislodged while crossing.
- Avoid tips and spills. Make sure your vehicle and the trailer are properly lined up with the crossing before you proceed.
- Weather conditions create additional hazards. Snow or fog can muffle the sound of an approaching train. Rain or ice can make crossings slick when roads are not.

GET OUT! GET AWAY!

- If your horse trailer becomes stuck on the tracks, get people and animals out and far away from the tracks immediately.
- Call the emergency notification number posted on or near the crossing, or notify law enforcement. Look for a US DOT number, six digits plus a letter, to identify the crossing.

INFORMATION FOR EQUESTRIANS

RAILROAD TRACKS AND THE RIGHT OF WAY ON EITHER SIDE OF THEM ARE PRIVATE PROPERTY.

- Ride only on an authorized and clearly marked trail. Not only is it extremely dangerous to ride on or near railroad tracks, but it is also considered trespassing, which is illegal.
- Never assume the track is no longer in use, even if foliage appears to be growing between the rails.
- Never attempt to cross railroad tracks at any place other than a clearly marked highway-rail grade crossing or public access crossing.
- A hoof can get caught in the gap between rail and road surface. It is best to dismount and lead your horse across the railroad crossing.

TRAINS CAN SURPRISE YOU AND YOUR HORSE

- Modern trains run swiftly and quietly on solid-weld steel rails. Don't count on hearing the old-time "clickety-clack" sound as one approaches.
- Locomotive engineers generally are required to blow the train horn at all crossings. They also will blow the horn as a warning if they see a hazard (such as a horse and rider riding too close to the tracks for safety).
- Always expect a train! Trains can run on any track, at any time, in either direction!

YOU CAN HELP OPERATION LIFESAVER SAVE LIVES!

SCHEDULE A PRESENTATION.

It's free. Across the nation certified Operation Lifesaver Presenters are available to speak to student drivers, professional drivers, school bus operators, general motorists, and 4-H and community groups.

VOLUNTEER!

Would you like to help deliver Operation Lifesaver's safety message in your community? Find out about becoming trained as an Operation Lifesaver Presenter or Associate.

VISIT

Visit www.oli.org or call Operation Lifesaver, Inc., at 1-800-537-6224 to contact your State Coordinator. To contact US Rider Equestrian Motor Plan, visit www.usrider.org.

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