

**Background Information:** In the Interest of Safety is a set of PowerPoint slides for Operation Lifesaver Authorized Volunteers to use for middle-school aged audiences to adult audiences. This deck of slides covers general safety messages, signs and signals, and trespass prevention messages.

In December of 2020, Operation Lifesaver developed an adaptation of *In the Interest of Safety* that could act as a stand-alone presentation. The deck of slides was given professional voice over, and additional graphics to assist and augment understanding of key rail safety messages. This facilitation guide is adaptable, and activities are designed to pick and choose to enhance your presentation.

**There are two ways to share this Presentation:**

**Option 1: Present by verbally preparing and advancing the slide**

This option works well when you have more time to stop and engage with discussion.

**Option 2: Present by Playing the video with guided Stop/Start**

This option works well when under a specific time frame, or with a large group.

**Options for Opening:**

**Start with a rhetorical question:** Start with a question that prompts an open-ended discussion. With this age group, engagement can feel difficult. Suggested topics to start:

1. Listen closely. Right now. Do you hear a train coming? Really? How about now? *Let the conversation drive you to share information about common misconceptions about trains and our “Out of Sight, out of mind” mentality.*
2. Name some things that you are focused on as you prepare to go out for a drive? *Various answers about adjusting mirrors, remembering your blinker. Remind students that driving is a full-focus job, and they may not be aware of how trains can impact their commute and community.*

**About this age group:** Young adults are interested in how information directly impacts their lives. They are invincible and sometimes believe that danger doesn't directly affect them. They are most responsive to open discussion and non-judgmental feedback. Remember to be cautious about how you are correcting wrong responses.

**Whether presenting verbally or through the video,** some places to stop and interact with your participants can be:

- **Slide 3:** You are in control of staying out of a train's way. An engineer cannot swerve to avoid you.
- **Slide 6:** Be sure to explain the 45-degree angle rule. Note on the slide/image WHERE it is safe to stand when moving away from the track, and how they will need to call ENS (there will be more information on that later)
- **Slide 7:** Take time to explain each element of the ENS sign *Note that the numbers are different at each crossing.*

- **Slide 8:** When else have you seen painted elements on the pavement? What do these symbols mean? Here, they refer to an upcoming track, and are a reminder that you need to slow down and be prepared for a crossing.
- **Slide 10:** Reiterate the point that *these are warning devices, not protective devices*. It is still up to the driver to ensure safe handling around an active warning.
- **Slide 12:** How many of you have seen this slide before? This *Road Parallels Track* means that at some point, if you turn, you will cross a track. What are some ways you might be able to help yourself stay even safer around this type of sign?
  - Slow down earlier
  - Be alert for warning signs
  - Be ready to check for trains if you note this to be a passive crossing.
- **Slide 14:** Do not answer questions about a Quiet Zone. These are federally regulated, monitored, and crossing-by-crossing. If students have specific questions about Quiet Zones (other than what to do if they find themselves in one), direct them to [www.fra.dot.gov](http://www.fra.dot.gov)
- **Slide 16:** Reiterate the principle, if you don't fit, don't commit!
- **Slide 17:** Trains overhang tracks by at least 3 feet—meaning sometimes more than! So, why would you think we would say to stand at least 15 feet back? *Wait for a few possible responses.*
  - We want you to be safe; and standing any closer than 15 feet can be unsafe
  - Poll: Do you think that the land right around tracks is public land? Why? Why wouldn't it be?
    - Explain here that land around tracks is called Railroad Right of Way and is private property.
    - Being too close to tracks is not just dangerous, it is also illegal.
- **Slide 18:** Imagine you're driving down a beautiful back road. It's dusk, and the stars are just beginning to come out. It's beautiful, with a big full moon. You speed up, rolling your windows down to enjoy the nice night air. Now imagine this beautiful image with a deer jumping out in front of you. It's scary, and can have big consequences, right? That's overdriving your headlights, and if you're doing that near railroad crossings, that deer might be a train.
- **Slide 19:** How many of you guys use your headphones? Let's do a quick elimination pole. Raise your hand if you ever use headphones—for any reason.
  - Keep your hands raised if you use headphones to talk on the phone.
  - Keep your hands raised if you use them to listen to music or podcasts.
  - Keep your hands raised if you use them while you work out.
  - How about keeping them raised if you use them when walking around—down the street?
- We use headphones for almost anything. And it's a safe bet that when you're using headphones, you're also multi-tasking. Multi-tasking is never something to do in a car. Not only does it distract you, it slows your reaction time in dangerous situations.
- **Slide 20:** Trespassing is being on or near those railroad tracks. It's important to highlight how trespassing can be dangerous. Point out that trespassing includes being on or near the railroad tracks. You can also show on the images WHERE trespassing is taking place and standing near these places.
  - Danger includes not being able to hear when a train is coming.
  - Be aware of where train tracks are within your town/community—just knowing is the first step in planning an alternative route around tracks and knowing where it is safe to cross.
- **Slide 21** Point out what an overpass and underpass are
  - *If you are familiar with the community or town: ask for specific places where people may want to consider where they would cross?*
  - Highlight the difference between a designated path (such as a sidewalk) and a path that is *Railroad Property*.

- **Slide 23:** Along the way, these workers could have made several different choices to help them stay safe. What are some different things that they could do?
  - It is illegal to drive around gates, but more than that, driving around the gates is incredibly dangerous!

### After Reading/Video:

- **Ask** participants the following open-ended questions:
  - What is one misconception that you had around trains?
  - Where is a place in your town where you know that trains and roads intersect?
    - Talk me through in at least three steps what you do at the crossing.
- **Answer** any questions that participants have.
- **Remind** students where they can find out more information, and type the URL into the Chat Box: [www.oli.org](http://www.oli.org)
- **If students are under 18, manually remove each.**

### Optional Supplemental Activities:

- **Lightning round T/F:**
  - Instruct participants that they will put up a palm (as if holding up their hand) if the answer is true.
  - They should put up a fist if an answer is false. Go through the following statements:
    - I will always hear a train coming.
    - A train engineer will always see me in time to stop.
    - It's okay for me to be near a track if no train is present.
    - There is always plenty of space between my car and the track for me to be safe.
    - My car can move faster than a train, even around a gate.
  - Work through each situation discussing why these are false statements (and some that are almost true!)
- **Breakout Rooms:**
  - Break up your participants so that there are at least four people in a breakout room.
    - Each breakout room should be assigned a shortened section of the presentation. These can include:
      - Where should I cross?
      - What should I do if I get stuck?
      - What happens if I think there is a problem at a crossing?
    - Once assigned, have your participants work out a scenario (they can be as dramatic as they want) for roleplaying the situation assigned. You can encourage them:
      - to involve quickly found props that support the situation they find themselves in (a plate for a steering wheel, a tube of mascara for distracted driving)
      - develop individual characters (such as a frantic mom with an apathetic dad trying to move kids safely out of a car)
      - develop backstory dialogue (such as starting with receiving a distressing text message before going on to 2)
  - This activity works better with moderate oversight from facilitator. It is good to let participants have a few minutes before jumping in to facilitate in these smaller groups.
  - After 10 minutes of planning and rehearsal, gather the individuals back into the main session and ask them to perform the scenarios worked out for the whole group.
    - With Zoom, you should have everyone NOT in the performing group turn off their cameras. Then, you will hide non-video participants so that the only people shown on screen are the group members.

*Operation Lifesaver is a nonprofit public safety education and awareness organization dedicated to reducing collisions, fatalities and injuries at highway-rail crossings and preventing trespassing on or near railroad tracks. Visit [OLI.org](http://OLI.org) for more information.*