

INTERMODAL SAFETY BRIEFING

Railroad Crossings

A motorist is almost 20 times more likely to die in a crash involving a train than one involving another motor vehicle. And part of the reason why is non-observance of proper rail crossing safety.

Importance

From 2009 through mid-July 2019 there were almost 22,000 highway vehicle-rail incidents resulting in 9,430 injuries and 2,645 fatalities according to the Federal Railroad Administration. Because crossings are so prevalent around intermodal facilities, it's critical that commercial drivers be aware of the dangers involved in crossings and the information available to them so they can stay safe. Drivers can start by driving without distractions and understanding the signage at and near railroad crossings. It's also critical that drivers not attempt to outrace a train, even when they're in a hurry. The ability to prevent a rail crossing accident is in the hands of the driver.

Stakeholders

This safety briefing is designed to assist all:

- **Motor Carriers**
- **Commercial Drivers**
- **Terminal Operators**
- **Railroads**
- **Insurance Companies**

Safety Tips

According to data from the first seven months of 2019, almost 60% of rail crossing incidents that involved tractor trailers occurred at crossings that have automatic warning lights, gates and/or bells. If drivers are not paying attention to their environment or are trying to rush to beat a train, even automatic warning devices will fail to stop them from getting into accidents. Certain times of the day show increased incident activity (around 10:00 a.m. and between 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.), another factor all involved can work to limit.

Operation Lifesaver is educating people with the aim to increase safety and reduce incidents in the rail network. For example, blue and white emergency notification signs are located at every crossing in the United States. The signs include a number to call if there is an obstacle on the tracks, like a broken-down tractor trailer. This call alerts the railroads and affords them as much time as possible to stop any oncoming trains.

People need to understand the signs and information available to them at railroad crossings and then they need to make smart decisions to keep themselves and others safe at railroad crossings.

