

Targeted Topic: Train Facts

SHORT LESSON APPROPRIATE FOR IN-CAR OR CLASSROOM

Learning Objectives

- Understand the risks associated with rail crossings, and how to be safe around them

Introduction

Share the following with the class: *When driving near railroad crossings, it's important to be familiar with signs and safe crossing procedures. It's also helpful to remember a few basic facts about trains themselves. Quick quiz:*

- *True or False: A motorist is 40 times more likely to die in a crash involving a train than another automobile.*
Answer: True. FACT: Trains are much larger and heavier than cars, and can do a lot of damage to a car—and its passengers—in a collision.
- *Fill in the Blank: Trains are large, heavy and can't stop quickly. An average freight train traveling at 55mph can take _____ to come to a full stop.*
Answer: A mile or more. FACT: If your car is on the tracks, a train may not be able to stop in time to avoid a collision.
- *True or False: About half of all vehicle/train collisions occur at crossings with flashing red lights, bells or gates that alert drivers to an approaching train.*
Answer: True. FACT: Crossings with flashing lights, bells and/or gates that alert drivers to an oncoming train are the sites of about half of vehicle/train collisions.

Engage the class in a brief discussion regarding this final point:

Why do you think so many accidents occur at crossings that are so clearly marked?

Possible answers may include: trying to beat a train (drive through the crossing before the train arrives), driving around a lowered gate, driving under a closing/raising gate, distracted driving leading to crashing through the gate, et al.

We're going to watch a short video that highlights a few train facts.

Watch Video

Train Facts [2:39]

Safety Scenario

Read the following scenario aloud, and engage students in a brief discussion to identify the correct answer to the question that follows. (Answer and related safety information are included below for you to share with students.)

You're on your way to an evening sporting event at school. All the parking lots are already full. You find a spot along the road within a short walking distance, but once you've parked, you have to walk across train tracks to get back to school. As you near the tracks you don't see any signage of any kind. There aren't any No Trespassing signs posted. Is it okay to cross here?

Answer: No. FACT: Even if you don't see a No Trespassing sign, walking over, on or along train tracks is trespassing. It is illegal and dangerous. The ONLY place it is safe and legal to cross tracks on foot is at a designated sidewalk crossing, pedestrian tunnel or pedestrian bridge.