



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Railroad
Administration**
www.dot.gov



School Bus Drivers *Always Expect A Train!*



Recent News:

Two Students Die in School Bus Collision with Train

BUFFALO, Mont. -- (March 10, 1998) A freight train struck a school bus at a crossing here early today, killing two children and injuring four people. The two children were brothers. Investigators said the collision, the resulting injuries and deaths were all preventable.

The incident in Montana was the second crash involving a school bus hitting a train at a crossing over the past few weeks; in February, a school bus collided with a freight train in Stinton, Texas, injuring 20. This spring, the U.S. Department of Transportation, in partnership with Operation Lifesaver, Inc., and the pupil transportation industry, will launch a public awareness campaign to educate school bus drivers across the nation about grade crossing safety.

Did you know—

- Nearly every 115 minutes, someone in America is hit by a train.
- People are 40 times more likely to die when involved in a collision with a train than when involved in a collision with another car, bus or truck.
- Nearly half of all collisions at railroad crossings occur where gates, lights or bells exist and are functioning properly.
- Trains cannot stop quickly or steer out of the way—An average train of 6,000 tons traveling at 55 miles per hour takes a mile or more to stop.

Life Saving Facts for School Bus Drivers: Crossing Tracks Safely



Try to plan your route so you do not cross any railroad tracks.



As you approach the crossing, slow down and test your brakes.



Stop so the front bumper is **no closer** to the track than 15 feet and **no farther** than 50 feet. The train is wider than the tracks, and you must be able to see if the track is clear.

***More Life Saving Facts
for School Bus Drivers at Crossings:***



Keep your foot on the brake so you can't move or be shoved into the path of a train.



Open the driver's window and the service door to check if a train is approaching.



Turn off radios and signal for the students to be quiet.



Start across when you are sure you don't see a train or hear a warning whistle.



Before moving, close the driver's window and the service door.



Never stop on the tracks or back up. Look beyond the tracks to be sure the containment area is large enough. Be sure the rear bumper can clear the tracks at least 15 feet.



Never change gears on the tracks—always use the lowest possible gear which allows you to cross without shifting.



Never pass on the tracks.



If the gate comes down after you have started across, drive through it even if it means breaking the gate—the gate is designed to break.



If your bus stalls or is trapped on the tracks, immediately get everyone off the bus. Move everyone far from the bus at an angle which is both away from the tracks and toward the train.



Be aware of the number of tracks you will be crossing and make sure no trains are approaching from either direction on other tracks.



After a train has passed over the crossing, wait until you are able to see in all directions that no other trains are approaching.

Helpful Resources:

For more lifesaving information, please contact:

Federal Railroad Administration (202) 493-6024
Federal Highway Administration (202) 366-0660
Federal Transit Administration (202) 366-2896
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (202) 366-9550
Operation Lifesaver, Inc. (800) 537-6224

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