

HIGHWAY-RAILWAY CROSSINGS TIPS FOR HEAVY-VEHICLE DRIVERS

Le ministère des Transports du Québec and Operation Lifesaver¹ would like to remind heavy-vehicle drivers to stay alert at places where the road crosses railway tracks. The number of needless tragedies can be greatly reduced by following these RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES AT HIGHWAY-RAILWAY CROSSINGS:

SUGGESTED APPROACH TO STOPPING AT HIGHWAY-RAILWAY CROSSINGS

- ↪ Slow down by shifting to a lower gear (manual transmission) and test your brakes.
- ↪ Check for traffic behind you while stopping gradually.
- ↪ Turn on four-way flashers; leave on until traffic behind you has safely stopped.
- ↪ Stop no closer than five meters from the nearest rail.
- ↪ To better hear the train, roll down the window, turn off audio equipment and fans.
- ↪ While stopped, look carefully in each direction for approaching trains, moving head and eyes to see around obstructions such as mirrors and windshield pillars.
- ↪ When waiting for the train to pass, put on your emergency brakes so you won't move onto the track.

A 2002 study sponsored by the Transportation Development Centre – Transport Canada cautions that many train warning horns are unlikely to be heard inside a moving vehicle when other sources of noise are present. It suggests that vehicles approaching passive crossings (without flashing lights) should reduce speed, turn off any noise sources and open the windows to have a better chance of hearing an oncoming train.

RESUMING TRAVEL

- ↪ Before resuming, make sure there is enough room on the other side of the track for the whole unit to clear the tracks, including your truck's overhang. Remember, the train will be a metre wider than the rails on both sides.
- ↪ Use a gear which will let you cross the tracks without shifting.
- ↪ Check the crossing signals one final time before proceeding.
- ↪ If the crossing lights begin to flash after starting over the tracks, KEEP GOING, it is safer to continue forward than to reverse.

TRUCKS HANDLING DANGEROUS GOODS

In Québec, in some provinces, as in the United States, placarded vehicles must stop at all highway-railway crossings.

¹ Operation Lifesaver is a national public education program sponsored by the Railway Association of Canada and Transport Canada. The Web address is WWW.operationlifesaver.ca.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

BE AWARE ! LOW-SLUNG UNITS CAN GET STUCK ON RAISED CROSSINGS.

STALLED OR STUCK ON THE TRACKS

If your truck stalls or gets stuck on a crossing, get out of the truck immediately and move quickly to a point at least 30 metres away from the track and the truck. This will reduce the chances of being struck by flying debris if the train hits the vehicle. Contact the railway. Many railway companies post their emergency numbers prominently at crossings. If this cannot be located immediately, call 911 or the local emergency number.

POLICE OFFICER OR FLAG PERSON AT THE CROSSINGS

If a police officer or properly-identified railway flag person is at the crossing, obey directions. Remember, however, that you are not relieved of the responsibility to ensure your personal safety and you must confirm that it is safe to cross the tracks by looking and listening for the approach of a train.

VIEW OF TRACKS AT CROSSINGS

Do not attempt to cross the tracks unless you can see far enough down the track to ensure that no trains are approaching. Be especially careful at crossings without gates, flashing lights or bell. You must look and listen to be sure it is safe to proceed.

VEHICLE SIZE, CLEARANCE AND OVERHANG

Know the length of your vehicle and allow for overhang, particularly if you are hauling a bulky product like logs or steel. Trains also extend over the rails by at least one meter. While the wheels of a rig may have crossed the track(s), many drivers do not realize that their trailers are hanging over. Many times, a collision could have been avoided if it were not for the last few meters.

Contact **Operation Lifesaver** or the safety league of Québec to schedule a free highway/railway safety presentation. Certified Presenters are available to speak to students in schools and driver training classes, youth and community groups, company safety programs and the general public. In addition, specialized presentations are available for educators, emergency responders, professional drivers and recreational groups.

Please also consider joining the many volunteers trained to deliver Operation Lifesaver's safety message. For more information on how you can become an Operation Lifesaver Presenter, call Operation Lifesaver or the safety league of Québec at the following addresses:

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This information bulletin is available at the following Web address www.mtq.gouv.qc.ca .

Une version française est disponible sur demande.