



Safety at Railroad Crossings



A train can't stop as quickly as a car. A train going 55 mph can take a mile or more to stop – that's about 20 football fields.

Because of their size, trains might look like they are moving slower than they really are. You notice the same thing when you see a large airplane landing.



The Safe Crossing Program is a joint initiative of Safe Kids USA and CN – North America's Railroad.

Teach children that trains and railroad tracks may be dangerous places. Railroad deaths and injuries can be prevented. Children should learn to never play on or near railroad tracks, and, if they must cross tracks, how to do so as safely as possible.

- In 2008, 744 people were killed and 1,372 were injured in railroad crossing and trespassing incidents in the United States. These incidents involved either trains and people or trains and motor vehicle occupants.
- In 2008, a total of 22 children ages 14 and under were killed and 122 were injured in incidents involving trains.
- Trespassing deaths occur when a person crosses over a non-public railroad crossing and is struck by a train. Trespassing incidents include illegally traveling on or beside railroad tracks either by foot, bicycle, car, ATV, snowmobile, or any other vehicle. Trespassing also includes taking a shortcut across railroad tracks or property at any time.

Test Your Knowledge

1. A train is going 55mph. After the train driver applies the brakes, how far will the train travel before it comes to a stop?

Answer: The length of about 20 football fields (up to 1 mile).

2. How long does it take from the time the lights begin to flash until the train travels through the crossing?

Answer: As little as 20 seconds – not enough time to make it across.

Quick Tips for Kids

Lesson 1: Never try to cross the tracks if a train is coming. Trains are very large and heavy, and take a long time to stop!

Lesson 2: Only cross at railroad crossings and always look both ways before crossing the tracks.

Lesson 3: Obey all signs and signals. Listen for a warning bell and train whistles. Watch for flashing lights.

Lesson 4: When a train is coming, stand at least 10 giant steps away from the tracks.

Lesson 5: If one train passes, make sure another one isn't coming. Trains can come from any direction at any time on another track.

Lesson 6: Always get off your bike and walk it across the tracks. Don't forget to wear your helmet when you ride your bike.

Lesson 7: Walking or playing on railroad tracks is dangerous.