



Loss Control Insight

Guarded and Un-Guarded Railroad Crossings

The vast majority of our ground searches take place in rural environments where as a vehicle operator you may cross both guarded and unguarded railroad crossings. In 2014 there were 3011 railroad related accidents resulting in 11,933 casualties. Of those, 971 were fatalities. According to the Department of Transportation, from January to September of 2015 there have been 1,928 railroad accidents resulting in 7,826 casualties, 741 of them fatal.

Here are some safety tips when operating a vehicle over railroad crossings.

1. Never drive around lowered gates--its illegal and deadly. If you suspect that a signal is malfunctioning, call the 1-800 number posted on or near the crossing signal or your local law enforcement agency.
2. Never race a train to the crossing- even if you tie you lose.
3. Do not get trapped on the tracks. Only proceed through a highway rail grade crossing if you are able to completely clear the crossing without stopping.
4. If your vehicle stalls on a crossing, immediately get everyone out of the vehicle and clear of the tracks. Call your local law enforcement agency for assistance.
5. At a multiple track crossing waiting for a train to pass, watch out for a train on the other tracks, approaching in either direction.
6. Be aware that trains cannot stop quickly. Even if the locomotive engine sees you, a freight train moving at 55 mph can take a mile or more to come to a stop once the emergency brakes are applied. That is at least 18 football fields in length.
7. Do not be fooled by the optical illusion- the train you see is closer to you and moving faster than you think. If you see a train approaching wait for it to go by before you proceed across the tracks.

Finally, did you know that 64 percent of all collisions between a motor vehicle and a train occur in daylight hours? Vehicle Operator Safety begins with you the driver. Drive Safe.