



Rail Safety Tips for Farm Machinery Operators

No matter what type of farm machinery you're operating, it's crucial to stay alert around railway crossings. Most farm crossings are passive (they don't have warning lights, bells, gates or signs), so you have to take extra care to cross safely. Be sure to follow these tips — they could save your life.



STAY BACK

Never stop or park closer than 5 metres from the nearest rail. Allow extra room for front-mounted buckets and chemical tanks on farm tractors.



LOOK AND LISTEN FOR TRAINS

When approaching a crossing, open cab windows, turn off radios and fans, remove headsets and listen for oncoming trains. Look carefully in both directions, making sure to move your head and eyes around obstructions such as mirrors, windshield pillars and equipment.



BEFORE YOU CROSS

Make sure your farm machinery is properly lined up with the railway crossing to ensure safe passage over the tracks. Take extra care to ensure the wheels cross the tracks at a 90-degree angle, otherwise heavily loaded wagons and tanks could tip over.

Know the size of the machinery you're operating, and make sure there is enough room on the other side of the tracks to fully clear the crossing without stopping. Remember that the back of your equipment should be no closer than 5 metres from the nearest rail! Ensure that farm tractors towing heavily loaded tanks and wagons will clear the crossing quickly and safely.



BE PREPARED

If you use a farm crossing regularly, be sure to keep the following information handy in case of an emergency: the location (railway, subdivision and mileage) and the railway's emergency phone number.



KNOW YOUR EQUIPMENT

Some farm machinery isn't easily transported across railway tracks. Never try to cross with low-slung equipment — it could get lodged in the rails. If you're operating new farm machinery for the first time — especially heavy or wide equipment — make sure it can get across safely. Always contact the railway for assistance with any nonstandard equipment.



TOWING EQUIPMENT

When towing equipment, always secure hitch pins with a pin key to prevent them from dislodging over rough farm crossings. Watch wagons and other equipment while crossing to make sure nothing dislodges or falls onto the tracks.



IF YOU GET STUCK

If your vehicle or machinery stalls or gets stuck on the tracks, get out immediately and move at least 30 metres away from the tracks. Contact the railway company immediately and let them know there is a vehicle on the tracks. Railway companies post their emergency numbers and crossing locations on a blue sign under the crossbuck or near the crossing. This information may also be displayed on a nearby signal house. If you don't see a railway emergency number, call 911.

REMEMBER:

Winter conditions can be especially hazardous. Snow can muffle the sound of approaching trains, and ice can cause your equipment to slide into crossings. Approach railway crossings in winter with extra care.

Know the Signs and Signals

FLASHING RED LIGHTS

STOP when flashing. DO NOT proceed until the lights stop flashing. If the lights begin flashing after you start crossing the tracks, keep going.

CROSSBUCK

YIELD if a train is approaching. Trains always have the right-of-way.

LOWERING GATES AND FLASHING RED LIGHTS

A train is approaching (even if you don't see it yet). DO NOT proceed until the lights turn off and the gates go up. It's illegal and dangerous to go around lowered gates.

MULTIPLE TRACKS

Multiple tracks are present. Multiple tracks may mean multiple trains. Wait until you can see clearly down the tracks in both directions before proceeding.



PAVEMENT MARKINGS

A large "X" and a wide white line on the road mean you're approaching a railway crossing. Stay behind the white stop line while waiting for a train to pass. No stop line? Stop at least 5 metres from the nearest rail.

LOW GROUND CLEARANCE CROSSING

Raised crossing ahead. If you drive anything low to the ground — like a bus, truck, sports car or trailer — you're at risk of getting hung up on the tracks. DO NOT proceed until you know your vehicle will clear the tracks.



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EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SIGN (ENS)

This is the first phone number to call if a vehicle is stuck or stalls on the tracks (this number may also be found on the signal house). You can also dial it to report people, vehicles or debris on the tracks, as well as damaged signs or signals, or obstructed views. The mile post and subdivision listed on the sign will help the railway to identify your location.

ADVANCE WARNING

Slow down, look, listen, and BE PREPARED TO STOP. Typically, this is the first sign you see when approaching a railway crossing.

