



Rail Safety Tips for Emergency Responders

It takes teamwork to deal with any incident on railway tracks and property. Emergency responders play an essential role on the front line. Follow these tips to ensure your team stays safe—it could save lives.



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COMMUNICATE WITH THE RAILWAYS

Make sure you notify all relevant railway companies before approaching any incident near their tracks or property. Share the exact location of the incident (such as the milepost, road name and town) with the railway. 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. Ensure all rail traffic is stopped in the area. When the incident response is complete and personnel have been cleared, inform the railway company so they can resume operations.



PROCEED WITH CAUTION

Park all emergency vehicles no closer than 5 metres from the nearest rail. Don't walk directly on the tracks to get to the incident, or go between or underneath railway cars. Stay alert, look in both directions and listen for trains before approaching or crossing tracks—even after you've contacted the railway company to stop rail traffic.



ENSURE YOU'RE VISIBLE

After having notified the railway and confirmed all rail traffic is stopped, place a red flare between the rails at least two-and-a-half kilometres from the incident in both directions. This will alert an approaching train that you are there.



CONTACT THE TRAIN CREW

Try to contact the train crew to determine their situation, but be aware that they may be suffering from injuries or shock.



PLAN AHEAD

Know which railway companies operate in your area and work with them to come up with an effective emergency response procedure. Make sure you know the appropriate protocol for handling railway incidents. Have emergency numbers for all railways and emergency dispatchers.

REMEMBER:

- Slow down, turn off sirens and other devices, and roll down your window to listen for trains when approaching railway crossings. Look both ways before continuing on.
- Plan emergency response routes that avoid railway crossings whenever possible.

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.

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.



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