

## Planning a Safe Route

When possible in planning your route, select a route that contains the fewest highway-rail grade crossings.

When it is necessary to cross tracks, select the safest crossings—those that offer the best sight distance (no obstructions to your clear line of vision down the tracks).

Select crossings that offer you enough containment or storage area for you to stop at a stop sign or stop-light directly across the tracks.

Allow enough space for your truck to fit on the other side without overhang onto the tracks.

Be especially careful at passive crossings (those without gates, flashing lights, bells). At these crossings it will be up to you to judge if a train is coming without the assistance of electronic equipment.

## Watch the Overhang

Know the length of your truck and allow for your vehicle's overhang.

While the wheels of the truck may have crossed both tracks, you might forget that your back end could still be hanging over the tracks.

Many times a crash could be avoided if it weren't for the last few feet. That's why it's important to know the length of your truck and add 15 feet for safety when figuring crossing distances.

## Hazmat Vehicles

If drivers are transporting hazardous materials, they are required to stop at rail crossings. The law specifies a stopping point between 15 and 50 feet from the nearest rail.

## Five Safety Procedures

1. When you see an Advance Warning sign, it alerts you to a railroad crossing ahead. It is time to begin to slow your vehicle, so you will be able to stop if a train is approaching.



2. While slowing or stopped, look and listen carefully in each direction for the sight and sound of a train.

3. Never shift on a railroad crossing to avoid the risk of stalling on the tracks.

4. Check for traffic around you before you start to move towards a crossing. Use a pull-out lane, if one is available. Turn on your flashers, if necessary to warn traffic that you are slowing down or stopping at the crossing.

5. Don't start across until you know you can cross the tracks completely without stopping.

## Before Resuming Travel

Take a quick look in both directions before you start your rig across. If there is a traffic signal or a stop sign across the tracks, make certain traffic will not trap you on the crossing.

Before you cross, plan to have 15 feet clearance between your ICC (rear) bumper of your truck and the farthest rail. This will prevent your truck's overhang from getting hit.

If there are flashing lights and gates at the crossing, stop when the lights start to flash. Wait until the lights stop flashing and the gates go completely up.

If there is no gate, but warning lights are flashing, you will be required to stop, then can proceed when it is safe to do so.

If the warning lights at the crossing begin to flash after you have started across the tracks with your rig, keep going. Do not back up.

## Avoid an Emergency

Learn the jurisdictions where you travel (which county/parish and city street crossings), so that you will know who to call if you get stuck or need assistance in a hurry.

If your truck does get stuck on a crossing, you need to take two actions:

1. Get out of your truck IMMEDIATELY. The quicker you act, the more likely you'll be able to alert the railroad to avert a tragedy.

2. The Emergency Notification Sign contains a phone number to the railroad. Call it. Explain your location, including the DOT number listed on the sign. If there is no sign, call the local authorities or 911.

TO REPORT STALLED  
VEHICLE ON TRACKS OR  
OTHER EMERGENCY  
CALL 1-800-832-5452  
AND REFER TO  
CROSSING #025017A  
ON NAVAJO BLVD

If a uniformed law enforcement officer in contact with the railroad or a flagman from the railroad is directing traffic at the crossing, follow their directions.

If there is no flagman, and you believe the signals are malfunctioning, do not proceed. Look for a phone number on the Emergency Notification sign at or near the crossing to report the situation to the railroad or contact local law enforcement. Then find another route.

More information is available:

[www.oli.org](http://www.oli.org)

[www.laoperationlifesaver.org](http://www.laoperationlifesaver.org)

225-921-8381

[patricia.edwards@la.gov](mailto:patricia.edwards@la.gov)

# Professional Driver Safety Quiz

Circle the most correct answer.

1. What does a crossbuck sign mean?

- a. Stop
- b. Yield
- c. One Way
- d. Do not enter



2. What are some of the other signs you might see at the crossing?

- a. A crossbuck with a stop sign
- b. A crossbuck with a yield sign
- c. A Don't Stop on Tracks sign
- d. All of the above.

3. An average freight train traveling 55 miles an hour takes a mile or more to stop. Which of these is equal in length to a mile?

- a. 18 football fields
- b. 15 city blocks
- c. 22 runs around a baseball diamond
- d. All of the above.

4. When you come up to a railroad crossing, how can you tell if you have enough room to safely clear the crossing?

- a. There's always enough room. Crossings are designed that way.
- b. You have to get out of the truck and measure.
- c. Know your truck length plus add 15 feet between your rear bumper and the farthest rail.
- d. Add 5 feet to the length of your cab & trailer.

5. Why is it hard to tell the speed of a train approaching the crossing?

- a. Trains can change speeds suddenly.
- b. An optical illusion makes the train seem farther away and moving more slowly than it actually is.
- c. Train's headlights don't shine at the same time.
- d. Truck cabs are high off the ground.

6. How long is a truck driver who holds a CDL disqualified from driving after a first conviction (violating railroad crossing safety regulations)?

- a. No less than 30 days.
- b. No less than 60 days.
- c. No less than 90 days.
- d. Six months.

7. What does this sign mean?

- a. The truck broke in two.
- b. The driver has an injured back.
- c. This is a high-profile, high-centered crossing.
- d. Lightning struck the truck.



8. When approaching a railroad crossing with a crossbuck, but no gate or flashing lights, what should you do?

- a. Crank up the radio
- b. Speed up
- c. Slow down, look and listen for a train and be prepared to stop.
- d. Hazmat vehicles should slowly go through the crossing.

9. If you have begun to cross the tracks when the warning lights begin to flash at the crossing, what should you do?

- a. Stop
- b. Back up
- c. Get out and lift the gate.
- d. Proceed across and clear the tracks.



10. Your truck gets stuck on the crossing. What steps do you take?

- a. Stay in the cab.
- b. Try to find a tow truck to move your rig.
- c. Get out and away from the tracks fast. Call the railroad or 911.
- d. Run down the track waving to an approaching train.

11. Why do trucks get hung up on a railroad crossing?

- a. Soil expands, which can make the crossing higher.
- b. Spring thaw from rain and snow can raise the crossing, while the ground sinks.
- c. Landing gear, truck jack or dolly legs are still extended.
- d. Each of the above.

12. You're stuck at a railroad crossing. You see the train coming and get out of your vehicle. Why is it best to walk in the direction of the train (if you see it), but at a 45 degree angle away from the tracks?

- a. You will be out of the path of the debris.
- b. The impact will occur at the crossing, while you walk in the opposite direction.
- c. It can take a mile for the average train to stop, so the truck will be pushed down the

- tracks, away from the crossing.
- d. All of the above.

13. When will a driver, who is required to have a commercial driver's license, be disqualified from operating a commercial motor vehicle for 60 days?

- a. When a CDL driver fails to slow down and check that the tracks are clear of an approaching train.
- b. When a driver, who is not required to stop, but seeing a train fails to stop before reaching the crossing.
- c. When a driver who is always required to stop (for example with a truck carrying hazmat) fails to stop before reaching the crossing.
- d. Each of the above.

Answer true or false to each statement by marking a T or an F.

14. \_\_\_ Federal law prohibits masking of violations involving rail crossings. (Masking is using a defensive driving class to expunge a traffic ticket or having the court reduce or switch the ticket to a lesser violation.)

15. \_\_\_ Some trucks must always stop at railroad crossings.

16. \_\_\_ A STOP sign at a highway-rail intersection means the same thing as a STOP sign at any intersection.



17. \_\_\_ The number posted below a crossbuck shows how many tracks there are at the crossing.



18. \_\_\_ When the gates stay down after a train has passed on a crossing with more than one set of tracks, it can mean another train is coming.

19. \_\_\_ If your truck stalls on the tracks, stay in the cab and keep trying to move your truck.

20. \_\_\_ If you can see a train, the train may not be able to stop in time to avoid a collision. It can take a mile or more to stop a train.

## Safety Quiz Answers

1. b, 2. d, 3. a, 4. c, 5. b, 6. b, 7. c, 8. c, 9. d, 10. c, 11. c, 12. d, 13. d, 14. T, 15. T, 16. T, 17. T, 18. T, 19. F, 20. T