

# Safety at Level Crossings

Údarás Um Shábháilteacht Ar Bhóithre  
Road Safety Authority



# ALWAYS EXPECT A TRAIN!

---

**STOP, LOOK BOTH WAYS, LISTEN**

---

**WHEN THE RAILWAY IS CLEAR,  
CROSS QUICKLY**

---

**SHUT AND FASTEN THE GATES  
AFTER YOU – IT'S THE LAW!**

---

**REMEMBER  
NEVER EVER STOP ON THE RAILWAY  
AND ALWAYS EXPECT A TRAIN**

---



**Iarnród Éireann**  
**Irish Rail**

**RSA**



## At Railway Level Crossings Always Expect a Train!



Always approach railway level crossings with care.

Obey signs and road markings.

Use the **Rail Cross Code** each time you cross:

- **Always expect a train!**
- **Stop, look both ways and listen**
  - **Stop** - behind the white line
  - **Look both ways** - watching for the lights of approaching trains
  - **Listen for a train horn** - no radio, no headphones!
- **Give way to trains**  
Let any approaching train pass, then look both ways again
- **When the railway is clear, cross quickly**  
Never stop on the railway
- **If there are gates, shut and fasten them after you**  
It's the law

From the Road Safety Authority, Iarnród Éireann and the Commission for Railway Regulation.

For more information visit [www.rsa.ie](http://www.rsa.ie), [www.irishrail.ie](http://www.irishrail.ie) and [www.crr.ie](http://www.crr.ie)

## About this booklet

The purpose of this booklet is to advise you on the safe use of railway level crossings.

A railway level crossing is an intersection where a road or path crosses a railway track. This booklet outlines the main types of railway crossings. These include:

- unattended railway crossings with gates,
- attended railway crossings with gates,
- automated railway crossings with road traffic lights only, and
- automated railway crossings with barriers and flashing red lights.

The booklet also explains:

- your responsibilities as a railway crossing user,
- how to cross a railway safely,
- what to do if you have a large load or there are lots of people at the crossing, and
- what to do in an emergency.

DOs ✓	DON'Ts ✗
Always expect a train	Don't ever think it's safe to predict when the next train will come
Always use the Rail Cross Code at unattended railway crossings	Don't drive onto the railway until you can see enough free space on the other side
Always obey road signs and markings	Don't blindly follow a vehicle across the railway crossing
Always switch off music systems and put away mobile phones	Don't stop on the railway crossing
Always control children and animals in your care	Don't park and leave your vehicle near the railway crossing
Always dismount if you are a cyclist or horse rider	Don't overtake another vehicle on or when approaching the railway crossing
Always shut and fasten the gates after crossing the railway	Don't play, or wear hoods or headphones, on or near the railway tracks

## Section 1: Unattended railway level crossings

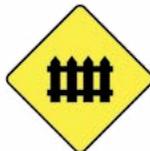
### What is an unattended railway crossing?

Unattended railway crossings are found on minor roads. They are usually guarded by iron gates which open out, away from the railway. These gates **must** be kept shut – there is no other protection for road users. As the user, you are responsible for opening and closing the gates.

These crossings can be dangerous to use. It is better to cross at a bridge or an attended or automated railway crossing if you can. If you must cross at an unattended railway crossing, follow the Rail Cross Code.



On the approach to an unattended railway level crossing you will see this warning sign.



*Level crossing ahead,  
guarded by gates or  
lifting barrier*

Use the **Rail Cross Code** each time you cross:

- **Always expect a train!**
- **Stop, look both ways and listen**
  - **Stop** - behind the white line
  - **Look both ways** - watching for the lights of approaching trains
  - **Listen for a train horn** - no radio, no headphones!
- **Give way to trains**  
Let any approaching train pass, then look both ways again
- **When the railway is clear, cross quickly**  
Never stop on the railway
- **If there are gates, shut and fasten them after you**  
It's the law

## Drivers of vehicles and animals

- what you **should** do at unattended railway crossings

### Always expect a train!

Trains can come at any time. It is dangerous to try to 'predict' when a train might come by relying on the railway schedule, a railway signal or the position of the gates or barriers at a nearby railway crossing. A railway signal of any colour, or even a nearby railway crossing gate placed across the railway, cannot tell you that it is safe to cross.

### Prepare

If you are crossing with an awkward vehicle or a crowd of people or a herd of animals, you **should** contact the railway signaller for advice. You will find the phone number on the instruction sign at the entrance to the railway crossing.

In all cases, you **must**:

- STOP clear of the gates
- Read the instructions at the crossing

- Switch off music systems and radios
- Put away your mobile phone
- Open windows on driver and passenger sides so you can hear an approaching train
- Open both gates when it is safe to do so - if possible, ask someone to help you
- Use the **Rail Cross Code** each time you cross

### Secure the gates

Once you have safely crossed the railway:

- Stop well clear of the railway crossing
- **Shut and fasten the gates**

You **must** shut and fasten both gates as soon as you and any person, animal or vehicle under your care has passed through. Even if you have followed another vehicle through the crossing, or you simply found the gates open when you arrived, you **must** shut and fasten them after you to protect others – **it's the law**.

*Failure to shut and fasten the gates is dangerous and you could be prosecuted.*

#### **REMEMBER**

**Stay Alert**

**Use the Rail Cross Code each time you cross**

**Drive across safely**

**NEVER stop on the railway**

**Always shut and fasten the iron gates - it's the law**

## Pedestrians crossing the railway

- what you **should** do at unattended railway crossings



### Always expect a train!

Trains can come at any time. It is dangerous to try to ‘predict’ when a train might come by relying on the railway schedule, a railway signal or the position of the gates at a nearby railway crossing. A railway signal of any colour, or even an attended railway crossing gate placed across the railway, cannot tell you that it is safe to cross.

### Prepare

If you are crossing with a crowd of people or a herd of animals, contact the railway signaller for advice. You will find the phone number on the instruction sign at the entrance to the railway crossing.

In all cases, you **must**:

- Read all the signs at the crossing
- Remove your headphones, hood or any clothing that might affect your sight or hearing
- Put away your mobile phone
- Use the **Rail Cross Code** each time you cross

In particular:

- Never walk along the railway line.
- Obey traffic lights, where provided.
- Only cross at a marked railway crossing.
- Dismount if you are on a bicycle or horse.
- Hold onto children near the railway and keep dogs on a lead.
- If crossing with a pram, wheelchair or bicycle, take care to avoid getting the wheels caught in the tracks.

### Secure the gates

Once you have safely crossed the railway, you **must shut and fasten the gates**.

Even if you found the gates open when you arrived, you **must** shut and fasten them after you to protect others – **it's the law**.

*Failure to shut and fasten the gates is dangerous and you could be prosecuted.*

Use the **Rail Cross Code** each time you cross:

- **Always expect a train!**
- **Stop, look both ways and listen**
  - **Stop** - behind the white line
  - **Look both ways** - watching for the lights of approaching trains
  - **Listen for a train horn** - no radio, no headphones!
- **Give way to trains**  
Let any approaching train pass, then look both ways again
- **When the railway is clear, cross quickly**  
Never stop on the railway
- **If there are gates, shut and fasten them after you**  
It's the law

**REMEMBER**

Stop, Look and Listen  
Give way to trains  
Never trespass onto the railway

**Have you shut the  
crossing gates?**

**THINK SAFETY**

*Remember, always shut and fasten the iron gates. Failure to do so is an offence and you could be prosecuted.*

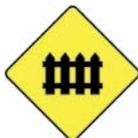
## Section 2: Other Crossings

### 1. Attended railway level crossings with gates or barriers operated by railway staff

These railway crossings are manually operated by railway staff and block the railway when open to the road. You can use these crossings only when the gates are fully open to the road.



On the approach to an attended railway level crossing you will see this warning sign.



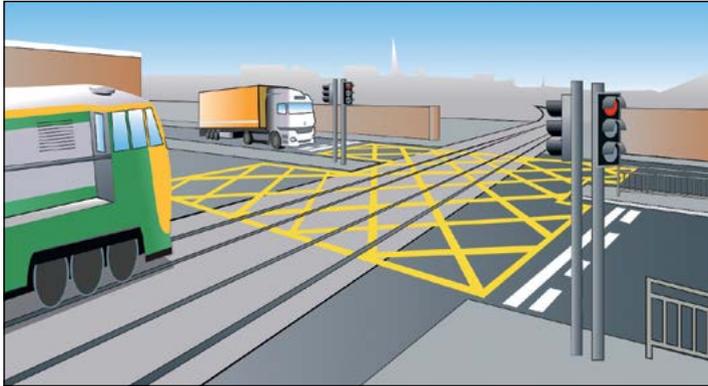
*Level crossing ahead,  
guarded by gates or  
lifting barrier*

#### Drivers - what you **must** do

- Slow down when approaching the railway crossing
- Be prepared to stop if necessary
- If the gates are closed, wait until all gates have been opened by the railway staff and it is safe to cross
- Don't drive onto the railway until you can see enough free space on the other side

## 2. Automated railway level crossings with road traffic lights only

These railway crossings have no barriers or gates. You **must** obey the road traffic lights at these open railway crossings.



On the approach to an automated railway level crossing you will see this warning sign.



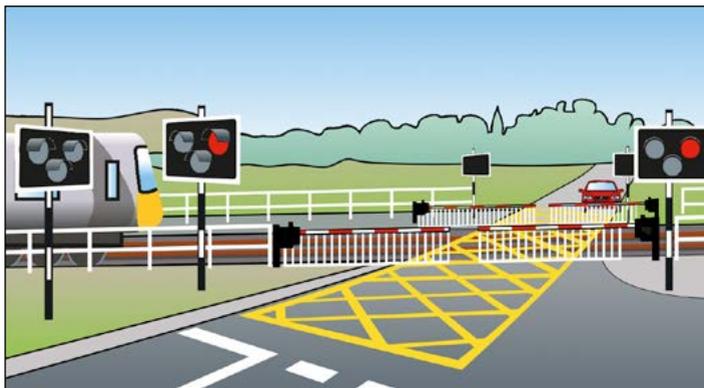
*Level crossing ahead,  
unguarded by gates  
or lifting barrier*

### Drivers - what you **must** do

- Obey the rules for traffic lights
- If you have already entered the crossing and the lights change, clear the railway crossing as quickly as possible
- Don't drive onto the railway until you can see enough free space on the other side

### 3. Automated railway level crossings with barriers and flashing red lights

These railway crossings have flashing lights and barriers which automatically come down when a train is approaching. The amber light is similar to an amber traffic light – you should stop safely when the amber light shows. When flashing red lights show, you **must** stop safely. You **must** never try and drive through.



On the approach to an automated railway level crossing you will see this warning sign.



*Level crossing ahead,  
with lights and barriers*

## Drivers - what you **must** do

- Obey the rules for traffic lights
- Don't drive onto the railway until you can see enough free space on the other side
- Don't blindly follow a vehicle across the railway crossing
- If you hear the alarm and have already entered the crossing, move through as quickly as possible
- Wait for all lights to go out and the barriers to rise before driving on

### **REMEMBER**

**Stop, Look and Listen**

**Give way to trains**

**Never trespass onto the railway**

## Section 3: Emergencies at railway level crossings and unusual movements

### Emergencies at railway level crossings

If an animal strays onto the railway, or if a pram, wheelchair, bicycle or other vehicle gets stuck on the railway, you **must** take the following actions:

- get clear of the railway, leaving the animal, pram, wheelchair, bicycle or vehicle where it is,
- move everyone well clear of the railway,
- contact the railway signalman using the telephone number which you will find on the instruction sign at the entrance to the crossing,
- say – ‘This is an Emergency’, and
- state the identification number (crossing number) shown at the railway crossing.

This identification number is different for each railway crossing



*Example: ‘Crossing number’ plate displayed at a level crossing*

#### **EMERGENCY**

**Get everyone off the railway**

**Phone the railway signalman**

**Say - ‘This is an Emergency’**

**State the ‘Crossing number’**

## Unusual movements across railway level crossings

Contact the railway beforehand if you are:

- arranging special events such as matches, funerals or processions that will involve crossing the railway,
- driving an awkward vehicle – for example, a long, low, wide, heavy or slow vehicle,
- moving vehicles with dangerous, unusual or very heavy loads,
- crossing the railway with a crowd of people, and
- crossing the railway when herding animals.

Use the phone number which you will find at the railway crossing.

If you are driving a very high vehicle and using a railway crossing with overhead electrified lines, such as on the DART network, please note that the general safe head-room is 5 metres.

# Rail Cross Code

- Always expect a train!



- Stop, Look both ways, and Listen



- Give way to trains



- Cross quickly when railway is clear



- Shut and fasten the gates after you





# Working To Save Lives

JUNE 2016



Plain English  
Approved by NALA

## Údarás Um Shábháilteacht Ar Bhóithre Road Safety Authority

Páirc Ghnó Ghleann na Muaidhe, Cnoc an tSabhaircín, Bóthar Bhaile Átha Cliath, Béal an Átha, Co. Mhaigh Eo  
Moy Valley Business Park, Primrose Hill, Dublin Road, Ballina, Co. Mayo  
local: 1890 50 60 80 fax: (096) 25252 email: [info@rsa.ie](mailto:info@rsa.ie) website: [www.rsa.ie](http://www.rsa.ie)