

Focused Topic: Railroad Crossing Safety Signs

SHORT LESSON APPROPRIATE FOR IN-CAR OR CLASSROOM

Learning Objectives

Identify and know the meaning of the signs and signals around railroad tracks:

- Crossbuck (with Yield and Stop), Advance Warning, No Train Horn, Multiple Tracks, Road Parallels Track, Flashing Red Lights/Gates, pavement markings
- Recognize the Emergency Notification System (ENS) sign and know in what circumstances (i.e., stalled car on the tracks, stuck vehicle on the track, etc.) to call the emergency number on the sign; know what the crossing number represents and how to use it

Materials

- *Railroad Crossing Safety Signs* Video [may be streamed or downloaded in advance of class]

Introduction

Pavement markings, signs and safety signals appear at railroad crossings to guide you safely over crossings, or to make it possible to access help quickly when you need it. What are these signs and signals and what do they tell us? Let's find out!

Watch Video

Railroad Crossing Safety Signs [4:50]

Engage the class in a brief discussion by asking the following questions. (Answers are provided for you to share with the students.)

- *What is the difference between an active and a passive crossing? (Hint: What signs/signals will or won't be present at each?)*

Answer: Warning systems that alert you when a train is approaching the crossing—such as Flashing Red Lights, bells and gates—are found at active crossings, but not at passive crossings.

- *At which of the following signs should you Yield?*
 - a) Crossbuck
 - b) Crossbuck w/Yield
 - c) Crossbuck w/Stop

Answer: a + b. All Crossbuck signs tell you to Yield to an oncoming train. A Crossbuck with Stop tells you to come to a complete stop

- *When should you call the 1-800 number on the Emergency Notification System sign?*

Answer: To report a vehicle stalled on the tracks or an obstruction on the tracks, if there has been a collision, if you suspect a gate or flashing red lights/bells are malfunctioning, or any emergency at the crossing or on the railroad tracks.

- *You see a crossbuck marking a railroad crossing that does not have flashing red lights, bells or gates to alert you to an approaching train. What do you do if, as you approach, no train is visible in either direction, but you hear a train horn?*

Answer: Stop & Wait for the train to pass. Once the train has gone by, Look and Listen for another Train. If there is no sign of an oncoming train, Drive across the tracks.

Focused Topic: Railroad Crossing Safety Signs (Extended Version)

EXTENDED LESSON APPROPRIATE FOR CLASSROOM

Learning Objectives

Identify and know the meaning of the signs and signals around railroad tracks:

- Crossbuck (with Yield and Stop), Advance Warning, No Train Horn, Multiple Tracks, Road Parallels Track, Flashing Red Lights/Gates, pavement markings
- Recognize the Emergency Notification System (ENS) sign and know in what circumstances (i.e., stalled car on the tracks, stuck vehicle on the track, etc.) to call the emergency number on the sign; know what the crossing number represents and how to use it

Materials

- *Railroad Crossing Safety Signs* Video [may be streamed or downloaded in advance of class]
- Know Your Sign Handout [copy 1 per student in advance of class]

Introduction

Pavement markings, signs and safety signals appear at railroad crossings to guide you safely over crossings, or to make it possible to access help quickly when you need it. What are these signs and signals and what do they tell us? Let's find out!

Watch Video

Railroad Crossing Safety Signs [4:50]

Engage the class in a brief discussion by asking the following questions. (Answers are provided for you to share with the students.)

- *What is the difference between an active and a passive crossing? (Hint: What signs/signals will or won't be present at each?)*
Answer: Warning systems that alert you when a train is approaching the crossing—such as Flashing Red Lights, bells and gates—are found at active crossings, but not at passive crossings.
- *True or False: Always look and listen—don't rely solely on flashing red lights, bells and gates to alert you to an oncoming train. Sometimes active warning systems may malfunction.*
Answer: True
- *At which of the following signs should you Yield?*
 - a) Crossbuck
 - b) Crossbuck w/Yield
 - c) Crossbuck w/Stop**Answer: a + b.** All Crossbuck signs tell you to Yield to an oncoming train. A Crossbuck with Stop tells you to come to a complete stop
- *When should you call the 1-800 number on the Emergency Notification System sign?*
Answer: To report a vehicle stalled on the tracks or an obstruction on the tracks, if there has been a collision, if you suspect a gate or flashing red lights/bells are malfunctioning, or any emergency at the crossing or on the railroad tracks.

Student Worksheet: *Know Your Sign*

Have students complete the worksheet: [Know Your Sign](#), in which they will match common railroad crossing safety signs and warning devices to their names and meanings.

In Context

Read the following scenario and engage the class in a brief discussion to try to identify the correct answers to the questions that follow. (Answers have been provided for you to share with the class as part of your discussion.):

You see a crossbuck marking a railroad crossing that does not have flashing red lights, bells or gates to alert you to an approaching train. What do you do if?

- *As you approach, no train is visible, and no train horn can be heard...*

Answer: Slow down as you approach the track. Look in both directions and Listen for a train. If there is no sign of an oncoming train, Drive across the tracks.

- *As you approach, you can see a train in the distance...*

Answer: Stop & Wait for the train to pass. Once the train has gone by, Look and Listen for another Train. If there is no sign of an oncoming train, Drive across the tracks.

- *As you approach, no train is visible in either direction, but you hear a train horn...*

Answer: Stop & Wait for the train to pass. Once the train has gone by, Look and Listen for another Train. If there is no sign of an oncoming train, Drive across the tracks.

Know Your Sign - ANSWER KEY

Label each of the following signs and warning devices with the correct name and letter of the matching meaning.

Sign Names: Advance Warning, Crossbuck with Yield, Crossbuck with Stop, ENS (Emergency Notification System), Flashing Red Lights, Flashing Red Lights with Gates, Multiple Tracks, No Train Horn, Road Parallels Track

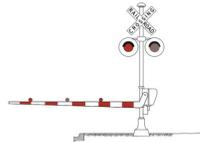
SIGN NAME & MEANING

Example:
Crossbuck with Stop
H



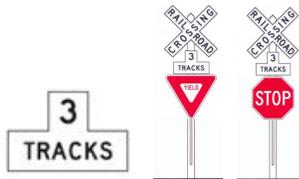
A - Warns of an approaching train. When the red lights are flashing, a train is approaching. Stop and wait for the train to pass, then proceed when it is clearly safe to do so.

Flashing Red Lights
with Gates
F



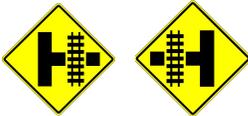
B - Marks the crossing and indicates that every driver must YIELD the right of way to a train. If you see this and a train is approaching, stop and yield to the train.

Multiple Tracks
G



C - A Quiet Zone has been established and train horn may not be sounded when a train is approaching. A train will only use its horn in emergency situations or if workers are near the tracks.

Road Parallels Track
I



D - This sign displays the number to call in an emergency, and includes a unique crossing number that identifies the location.

Crossbuck with Yield
B



E - Warns drivers that the road crosses railroad tracks ahead. Reminds the driver to slow down, look and listen for a train and be prepared to stop if a train is approaching.

No Train Horn
C



F - Warns of an approaching train and used to close the road when a train approaches. It is illegal to go around the gates.

Flashing Red Lights
A



G - Indicates the number of tracks present if you will be crossing more than one track.

ENS (Emergency
Notification System)
D



H - A driver must always stop at the STOP sign in advance of the railroad tracks.

Advance Warning
E



I - Identifies highway-rail intersections that appear immediately after making either a right or left turn.

Know Your Sign

NAME:

Label each of the following signs and warning devices with the correct name and letter of the matching meaning.

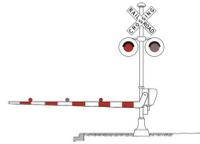
Sign Names: Advance Warning, Crossbuck with Yield, Crossbuck with Stop, ENS (Emergency Notification System), Flashing Red Lights, Flashing Red Lights with Gates, Multiple Tracks, No Train Horn, Road Parallels Track

SIGN NAME & MEANING

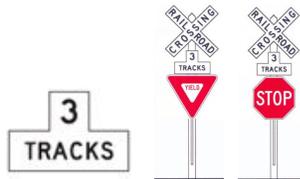
Example:
Crossbuck with Stop
H



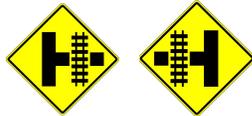
A - Warns of an approaching train. When the red lights are flashing, a train is approaching. Stop and wait for the train to pass, then proceed when it is clearly safe to do so.



B - Marks the crossing and indicates that every driver must YIELD the right of way to a train. If you see this and a train is approaching, stop and yield to the train.



C - A Quiet Zone has been established and train horn may not be sounded when a train is approaching. A train will only use its horn in emergency situations or if workers are near the tracks.



D - This sign displays the number to call in an emergency, and includes a unique crossing number that identifies the location.



E - Warns drivers that the road crosses railroad tracks ahead. Reminds the driver to slow down, look and listen for a train and be prepared to stop if a train is approaching.



F - Warns of an approaching train and used to close the road when a train approaches. It is illegal to go around the gates.



G - Indicates the number of tracks present if you will be crossing more than one track.



H - A driver must always stop at the STOP sign in advance of the railroad tracks.



I - Identifies highway-rail intersections that appear immediately after making either a right or left turn.