



FACT SHEET #7

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Railway Safety: From farm to field and home again

If you live on a farm located near a railway then you can likely relate to an incident or near incident involving a train. Unfortunately, incidents with trains happen all too often.

There are more than 45,000 kilometers of railway tracks in Canada and much of it runs through farmland. On average, there are 300 collisions attributed to highway/railway grade crossings in Canada that result in the death of approximately 40 people and serious injury to another 45. One in seven of these collisions occurs at private or farm crossings.

Trespassing is another killer. Each year, on average, 60 people are killed and another 25 are seriously injured while trespassing on railway property. About 42 per cent of these trespassing fatalities are pedestrians walking on the railway tracks, bridges, overpasses or tunnels. Snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles account for 28 per cent of trespasser fatalities and another 16 per cent are killed when struck while trespassing in railway yards.

Part of the reason for these fatalities is that trains can give a false impression that they are farther away and traveling more slowly than what they really are. If the train tricks you - you're dead!

Sometimes farmers who live near railways develop a complacency that can be fatal. It's important to keep farm-related railway safety fresh in your mind. Here are a few tips to remember:

- If your equipment stalls at a crossing, get off and call your local railway emergency number, 911 or your local police. Find out these local emergency service numbers before there is an emergency and keep them handy.
- Don't assume that trains only run at a certain time. Trains can run any time of the day or night, on any track, in either direction.
- Keep crossing gates closed and locked.
- Ensure that all users of your crossing are aware of recommended safety requirements.
- Always look in both directions to make sure that it is safe to cross before doing so.
- When stopping to open gates, park your vehicle wheels clear of the tracks by at least five metres.
- When driving long equipment, make sure the implements have cleared the tracks by at least five metres before stopping. Be careful not to get trapped between two sets of tracks.
- Be especially alert at night when approaching an unmarked crossing, as it can be difficult to see a passing train.

Railway Safety continued...

- In winter, ensure ploughed snow from the road is not left across the tracks or in a location that obstructs sightlines. Approaches should be kept sufficiently sanded or salted, and gated crossings should be closed, if seasonal.
- When towing implements, always secure hitch pins with a pin key to prevent them from becoming dislodged when moving across rough farm crossings.
- Take extra care to have each pair of implement wheels cross the tracks straight on, otherwise heavily loaded wagons and tanks could tip from the shifts in weight.
- Watch wagons and other equipment during the crossing so that no loaded materials are dislodged onto the train tracks.

It's important to be extra careful around railway tracks because the train cannot react to an emergency situation quickly. By the time the train engineer sees an obstacle – it's too late to stop short of that obstacle. A freight train traveling at 90 km/h can take more than 1.6 kilometres to stop.

For more information on railway safety please call Operation Lifesaver at (613) 564-8094 or visit their web site at www.operationlifesaver.ca .

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture along with Farm Credit Canada, the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada want to remind Canadian farmers to look, listen and live! *Farm Safety Means Farm Safely*

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For more information call:

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