
Rail Safety Tips - Bulletin #4

A lot of exciting things are happening at Port Miami which helps solidify the port's position as one of the leading ports in the Maritime industry. The most immediate addition is the advent of freight trains – another means to move cargo. It's been said that trains offer among the most efficient transportation available for moving passengers and cargo and the U.S. Department of Transportation projections calling for substantial increases in rail transport over the next three decades.¹ As technology helps build quieter, faster and more efficient trains, our responsibility to make Port Users and Port Miami employees aware of how to safely interact, passively or actively, around them increases, too. We must work with our rail partners to meet the safety challenges accompanying the rail renaissance at Port Miami. Therefore, this Safety Bulletin discusses some of those safety challenges faced from interaction with railways and trains and provide safety tips recommended by OperationLifeSavers.org to pedestrians and drivers for raising awareness and improving the overall public safety on and around rail-grade crossings and tracks.

Rail safety is for everyone, not just drivers.

Pedestrian Safety tips:

- **The only safe place** to cross a rail is at a designated public crossing with either a crossbuck, flashing red lights or a gate. Cross tracks **ONLY** at designated pedestrian or roadway crossings.
- **Railroad tracks, trestles, yards** and equipment are private property. Unauthorized individuals are trespassing and subject to criminal prosecution; you could be injured or killed in a busy rail yard.
- **It can take a mile or more to stop** a train, so a locomotive engineer who suddenly sees someone on the tracks will likely be unable to stop in time.
- **Trains overhang the tracks** by at least three feet in both directions; loose straps hanging from rail cars may extend even further. If you are in the right-of-way next to the tracks, you can be hit by the train.
- **Flashing red lights** indicate a train is approaching from either direction. You can be fined for failure to obey these signals. Never walk around or behind lowered gates at a crossing, and **DO NOT** cross the tracks until the lights have stopped flashing and it's safe to do so.
- **Do not walk, fish or dive** from railroad trestles. There is only enough clearance on the tracks for a train to pass. Trestles are not meant to be sidewalks or pedestrian bridges! Never walk, run, cycle or operate all terrain vehicles (ATVs) on railroad tracks.
- **Do not attempt to hop aboard** railroad equipment at any time. A slip of the foot can cost you a limb or your life.
- **Be aware trains do not follow set schedules.** Any Time is Train Time!

¹ <http://www.ushsr.com/ushsr.html>

Vehicle Safety:

- **Trains and cars don't mix.** Never race a train to the crossing — even if you tie, you lose.
- **The train you see is closer and faster-moving** than you think. If you see a train approaching, wait for it to go by before you proceed across the tracks.
- **Be aware that trains cannot stop quickly.** Even if the locomotive engineer sees you, a freight train moving at 55 miles per hour can take a mile or more to stop once the emergency brakes are applied. That's 18 football fields!
- **Never drive around lowered gates** — it's illegal and deadly. If you suspect a signal is malfunctioning, call port security at 305-329-4050.
- **Do not get trapped on the tracks;** proceed through a rail grade crossing only if you are sure you can completely clear the crossing without stopping. Remember, the train is three feet wider than the tracks on both sides.
- **If your vehicle ever stalls on a track** with a train coming, get out immediately and move quickly away from the tracks in the direction from which the train is coming. If you run in the same direction the train is traveling, when the train hits your car you could be injured by flying debris. Call port security for assistance.
- **When you need to cross train tracks,** go to a designated crossing, look both ways, and cross the tracks quickly, without stopping. Remember it isn't safe to stop closer than 15 feet from a rail.
- **ALWAYS EXPECT A TRAIN!** Freight trains do not follow set schedules.

Signs of the Times:

Because crossings on Port Miami have very little vehicular and train traffic, it may not be cost effective to install and maintain gates or flashing lights. To be clear, gates do not prevent crashes, people do. Statistics show that approximately half of all highway-rail grade crossing incidents occur where gates and flashing lights or some active warning device is present and operational.² Remember that trains always have the right-of-way, therefore, drivers and pedestrians have the responsibility for adhering to the warnings the signals provide. Below are examples of signs you may see around the railways on the port. It is your responsibility to adhere to them. Any signal ignored is as useless as no signal at all.



Remember - No Trespassing!

Remember, railroad rights-of-way and tracks are private property and should only be crossed at authorized crossings. You may see signs similar to this one reminding you to stay off of the tracks. Even if there are no signs present, you should stay off the tracks and right-of-way and cross only at approved crossings.

² <http://oli.org/>