
The Belleville Beat

Belleville Police Department
Belleville, IL 62220

October 2004
Volume 10, Number 10

From the Desk of Sgt. Don Sax

The Belleville Beat, October 2004, has train crossing safety tips published by Operation Lifesaver. Operation Lifesaver is a non-profit organization dedicated to preventing railroad crossing mishaps.

Train Crossing Safety

- Never drive around lowered gates – It's illegal and deadly. If you suspect a signal is malfunctioning, call your local law enforcement agency or the railroad, OR dial 911.
- Never race a train to the crossing – Even if you tie, you lose.
- Do not get trapped on a crossing. Only proceed through a crossing if you are sure you can cross the entire track.
- Get out of your vehicle if it stalls on a crossing and call your local law enforcement agency for assistance. (Move away from the tracks in the direction from which the train is approaching.) Only attempt to restart if you can post lookouts to warn of approaching trains.
- Watch out for a second train when crossing multiple tracks.
- Do not be fooled by the optical illusion – 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.
- Expect a train on the track at any time. Trains do not follow set schedules.

Be aware trains cannot stop quickly. It can take a mile or more to stop once the emergency brakes are applied. When the engineer can see you, it is already too late to be able to avoid a collision.

1. 150-car freight train approximate stopping distance
30 mph = 3,500 feet or 2/3 of a mile
50 mph = 8,000 feet or 1 ½ miles

2. 8-car passenger train approximate stopping distance
60 mph = 3,500 feet or 2/3 of a mile
79 mph = 6,000 feet or 1 1/8 miles

Do not misjudge the train's speed and distance. A train's large mass makes it impossible to accurately judge its speed and distance.

Operation Lifesaver also publishes safety tips for pedestrians. They include:

- Railroad tracks, trestles, yard and equipment are private property and trespassers are subject to arrest and fines. Too often the penalty is death. There are over 200,000 miles of railroad tracks in the U.S. Since 1990, there have been over 3,672 people killed while trespassing on road rights-of-way and property.
- DO NOT walk, run, cycle or operate all terrain vehicles (ATVs) on railroad tracks and property or through tunnels.
- Cross tracks ONLY at designated pedestrian or roadway crossings. Observe all warning signs and signals.
- DO NOT hunt, fish or bungee jump from railroad trestles. There is only enough clearance on tracks for a train to pass. They are not meant to be sidewalks or pedestrian bridges.
- DO NOT attempt to hop aboard railroad equipment at any time. A slip of the foot can cost you a limb.
- Be aware trains DO NOT follow set schedules. Any Time is Train Time!

REMEMBER: Rails and Recreation DO NOT Mix!