



RAIL SAFETY PRESENTER GUIDE

These guidelines, facts and safety tips should be read and understood prior to delivering a rail safety presentation.

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WHO CAN PRESENT

Only those who have railway experience and a connection to a school or group through their children, trained Operation Lifesaver presenters or railway police should approach schools to offer presentations.

Approved presenters:

- 1) CP employees who are parents
- 2) Teachers
- 3) Operation Lifesaver presenters
- 4) Railway police

If you do not fall into one of these categories but are interested in becoming a trained presenter, contact [Operation Lifesaver](#).

PRESENTER GUIDELINES

The purpose of a rail safety presentation is education. Presenters should aim to teach about how trains and railways operate so students can understand the risks. Please read and understand these guidelines and safety messages to deliver an effective presentation.

- Stick to the safety message. Do not attempt to invoke fear or to create an emotional reaction.
- Know the material and stick to what you know.
- Know the age group of your audience, and present the recommended materials. Use language that is appropriate for the age group.
- If there has been a rail safety incident in the community, avoid speaking about it in any detail. You will not know the extent to which your audience has been impacted by the incident and will not know the whole story.
- Do not offer your opinion or guess at an answer if you do not know it. Know when to say, "I don't know."
- If you don't know the answer, volunteer to find out and get back to the person or the organizer.
- Do not let yourself get into a no-win situation by arguing with someone in the audience. If someone wants to argue a point, agree to meet with them following the presentation to discuss it.
- Be professional in appearance and language. If you are a CP employee, remember that you represent your organization any time you speak in a public forum.
- Speak clearly and at a level appropriate for the size of your audience.

- Use proper posture, eye contact, and gestures to help emphasize your message.
- If you are a railroader, wear your full personal protective equipment so you can speak about the importance of safety culture.
- Thank the organization and person who invited you to speak.
- Introduce the audience to Operation Lifesaver, a national non-profit rail safety organization that operates in Canada and the U.S. Show or mention their websites www.operationlifesaver.ca or www.oli.org to older audiences and talk about additional resources available through them.
- For further training on delivering a rail safety presentation or to see about booking a presentation, contact Operation Lifesaver: ([Canada/U.S.](#))

RAILWAY FACTS

These facts show how railways and trains operate and the associated hazards. Presenters can have the audience guess about these facts to get them more engaged. For example “Who knows how much a locomotive weighs?” or “When do trains come?”

General

- The average locomotive engine weighs 110 tons. Compare that to the average automobile, which weighs less than two tons, or an average elephant which weighs seven tons.
- Even under emergency braking, a train may take as much as the length of 18 football fields to stop (up to 2 kms).
- When people are distracted by headphones, smartphones or cameras, they won't hear a train approaching.
- At 100km/h, straps and chains - or other loose items - hanging from a train can seriously hurt someone standing nearby. Standing too close to trains or tracks can be very dangerous.
- For the young adult audience, present the statistics. [Canada/U.S.](#)

Trespassing

- Trespassing is a leading cause of railway related fatalities and injuries.
- All railway trains, tracks, bridges, tunnels, yards and equipment are railway property, hence private property. Trespassers can be subject to a fine.
- Expect a train on any track at any time. Any time is train time, so be cautious at a crossing any time of the day or night.

- In railway yards, cars can move suddenly and without notice causing a fall and possibly serious injury or death to unsuspecting trespassers.

Drivers

- More than half of railway related incidents occur at crossings with active warning devices (gates, lights, bells).
- Trains blow their whistle at most railway crossings unless the community has an approved whistle ban in place to reduce noise. At crossings where trains are required to whistle; they start to whistle 400 meters (1/4 mile) before the crossing and whistle until the train is fully occupying the crossing.
- It is dangerous and illegal to drive, walk or ride around the gates. You may not proceed until the gates are fully raised and the signals have stopped operating.

RAIL SAFETY TIPS

Now that you have educated the audience about how railways and trains operate, discuss these safety tips. Discuss pedestrian safety more with younger audiences. Discuss dangerous behavior, driver safety and trespassing hazards more with older audiences.

Pedestrian safety

- Cross tracks only at marked crossings. Observe and obey all warning signs and signals.
- Just like you cross at a crosswalk, always look both ways.
- Watch out for a second train. When the last car of a train passes the railway crossing, do not proceed until you are sure that there is no train coming on another track, in the same or the other direction.
- When crossing tracks at a crossing with wheeled equipment such as bicycles, wheelchairs or strollers, cross the tracks at a 90-degree angle to avoid having the wheels get caught.

Dangerous behavior

- Do not listen to loud music on headphones around railway property or walk distracted by your smartphone. Being aware of your situation is the best way to protect yourself from harm.
- Do not use tracks as a background for a photo shoot. A train can come at any time and catch you off guard.
- Never try to climb through or under a train that is stopped. Trains can move suddenly and without warning.
- Do not walk, run, cycle or operate recreational vehicles (i.e. ATV's, snowmobiles...) on railway tracks or rights-of-way.

- Do not hunt, fish or bungee jump from railway bridges. They are not designed as sidewalks or pedestrian walkways - there is only enough clearance on the tracks for a train to pass.
- Do not attempt to hop aboard railway equipment at any time. A slip of the foot can cost you a limb, or your life.

Drivers

- Drivers cannot accurately perceive the actual distance and speed of a train on its approach. Never race to beat a train to a crossing. You will lose.
- Always look both ways when approaching a crossing. If there are gates and they are down, never drive around them.
- If your vehicle ever stalls on a crossing, exit the vehicle immediately and call the railway's phone number posted at the crossing or 911.
- Never idle your car on a crossing. You could become stuck between other vehicles should a train come and it increases the risk of stalling on the tracks.
- Know your railway signage. Review the "[Driver Safety Quiz](#)"

Be a rail safety ambassador

- Report all railway hazards and/or trespassing concerns to the appropriate railway. You can contact the railway in an emergency by finding the 24/7 emergency telephone number on the back of a cross buck sign or on the front of the post, or on equipment boxes near the crossing. If you can't find the emergency number quickly and safely, call 911. Railways often have telephone numbers and email addresses to report non-emergency concerns to them on their websites.

- Remind your family and friends that railway incidents are 100% preventable. Simply being aware of hazards saves lives.
- Ask the audience to share the railway safety message and materials with family and friends. If they are a young adult or older audience, let them know to follow Operation Lifesaver on social media.