

Iowa DOT Urging Agribusinesses and the Public to Be Safe at Railroad Crossings During *See Tracks? Think Train® Week 2025* and Beyond

AMES, Iowa – September 10, 2025 – The Iowa Department of Transportation is observing national rail safety with **“See Tracks? Think Train® Week 2025”** during September 15-21. Iowa is joining forces with [Operation Lifesaver, Inc.](#) to raise awareness and promote rail safety education to assist drivers with making good decisions at Iowa public highway-railroad grade crossings and prevent rail property trespassing.

As harvest approaches, rail safety is a high priority at the Iowa DOT, which advocates for a safe, secure, and efficient rail system that ensures Iowa's economic growth and development in rail infrastructure. With the majority of at-grade crossings in rural areas, the primary focus of this year's educational campaign is on agricultural operations that harvest and transport commodities to market.

Agribusinesses using farm equipment and grain haulers are often traversing *active* (signs/lights/gates/bells) and *passive* (crossbuck signs only) at-grade crossings during harvest season. These crossings are where the risk of crashes is greater due to misjudging the time it takes for their vehicles to cross tracks against an approaching freight or passenger train's speed, or not seeing or hearing an oncoming locomotive.

Iowa has 4,042 public at-grade railroad crossings and 2,446 private at-grade crossings. Within the public crossings, 2,203 are passive (crossbuck signs only) and 1,839 of those are active (1,203 with flashing lights gates and 636 with flashing lights only). More than half of the public crossings intersect with public roadways at passive crossings, where most collisions occur.

Poor decisions at passive crossings and trespassing on tracks can lead to bad consequences. It takes the average freight train traveling 55 mph more than a mile – the length of 18 football fields – to stop. Every year, 2,100 North Americans are killed or seriously injured when they engage in unsafe behavior around tracks and trains. In the U.S. alone, a person or vehicle is hit by a train every three hours.

Iowa DOT Rail Director Amanda Martin says the week-long campaign spotlights the critical importance of making safe choices around railroad tracks and trains, which starts with helping Iowans learn about high-risk situations and how to report rail emergencies through the blue and white Emergency Notification System (ENS) signs found at every railroad crossing.

“Rail safety is important every day of the year, but especially during the extra busy time each fall when Iowa farmers are working to harvest their crops,” says Martin. We want to help ag operations and the general public make safe decisions as they access at-grade

crossings, and learn the risky behaviors that can contribute to injuries and fatalities. Everyone has a role in making our communities and our rail system safer,” she adds.

During “See Tracks? Think Train® Week 2025,” new social media messaging, videos and public service announcements (PSAs) will be released featuring tips, guidance, and personal stories of people who have been directly affected by rail crossing or trespassing incidents. The full campaign can be accessed at oli.org/stop-track-tragedies.

In Iowa, the following themes and messaging will be emphasized:

- **Monday, Sept. 15** kicks off the week with the overarching theme of “See Tracks? Think Train®” and a focus on media outreach with key data points, and that passive crossings are where fatality and injury risk increase the most.
- **Tuesday, Sept. 16** focuses on risks at passive crossings, such as misjudging the speed and distance of a train and how the use of headphones can impair one’s ability to hear train horns.
- **Wednesday, Sept. 17** highlights crossing safety, with communication to farmers and the general public about the importance of the Blue and White Emergency Notification System (ENS) signs at crossings and understanding that Iowa law provides that trains always have the right-of-way at railroad crossings.
- The theme for **Thursday, Sept. 18** is professional driver safety, showcasing how to stay safe as an agribusiness driver with the four key conditions that impact driving safety and knowing that at passive crossings, drivers need to remember that trains are faster and quieter than many think.
- **Friday, Sept. 19** focuses on always thinking of trains when seeing tracks. Just because a train passed through a crossing earlier doesn’t mean another train might not approach on the second set of tracks. When you see tracks, know that a train can approach on any track, at any time, from any direction.
- **Saturday, Sept. 20** highlights trespass prevention, educating people about the dangers and illegality posed by being on or near the tracks. It also focuses on the excuses officials have heard for being involved in a collision or a near hit. The only safe and legal place to cross railroad tracks is at designated railroad crossings.
- **Sunday, Sept. 21** promotes “No Photo, Video or Selfie is Worth the Risk,” to warn professional and amateur photographers, as well as social media influencers, against putting themselves or others in danger by illegally taking photos, videos or filming near tracks and trains.

For additional information on participating or to access campaign materials, please visit [the Operation Lifesaver, Inc. website](#).

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For general questions on rail-ag safety, contact Iowa DOT Rail Director Amanda Martin at amanda.martin@iowadot.us or 515-239-1653.

About Operation Lifesaver

Operation Lifesaver, Inc. (OLI) is a national #RailSafetyEducation nonprofit dedicated to stopping track tragedies through public awareness and education campaigns as well as a national volunteer network that gives free presentations encouraging safe behavior near tracks and trains. [OLI](#) supports the efforts of 47 state programs and the District of Columbia in sharing the rail safety education message. Explore OLI's virtual library of rail safety materials on the oli.org website. Visit oli.org to learn more, take a rail safety pledge, request free presentations and volunteer. Follow OLI on social media via [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Pinterest](#), [X](#) and [YouTube](#).