

NRMCA Monthly Safety Initiative

Volume 2, Issue 5



Railroad Crossings

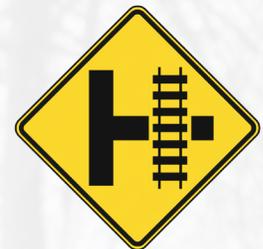
Ready Mixed Concrete Mixer Trucks and Railroad Crossings

Nearly all ready mixed concrete trucks encounter railway crossings on a daily basis, which are found throughout the country. There are an estimated 140,000 public railroad crossings and 50,000 private railroad crossings. Due to their weight, mixer trucks are relatively slow to accelerate and also relatively slow to brake and reduce speed. A freight train traveling at 55 miles per-hour will take over a mile or more to stop. Care must be used at every railroad crossing. When a train vs. a ready mixed concrete truck incident occurs, the train wins every time.



What to Know About Mixer Trucks and Railroad Crossings

Mixer drivers should know that trains have the right-of-way 100% of the time. Trains can travel in either direction on the tracks. Always assume tracks are in-service even if they have weeds or look unused. Modern trains are quiet and may appear farther away and slower than in actuality. The yellow circular sign warns of a rail crossing ahead. Pavement markings on paved roads serve a similar purpose. Stop lines painted on pavements show a safe place to stop and look for approaching trains. On gravel roads there are obviously no pavement markings or stop lines, and the mixer truck driver must stop no closer than 15 feet. Yellow Diamond-Shaped Parallel Track signs identify highway-rail intersections that appear immediately after making either a right or a left turn. The Crossbuck sign is the most common sign at public highway-rail intersections. It marks the crossing and should be considered the same as a Yield sign. Flashing Red Lights (with or without bells) warns of an approaching train. When the red lights are flashing, a train is approaching. Flashing red lights and gates-are used to close the road. It is illegal to go around the gates.



Railroad Crossings 7-Step Technique

- Think first and approach crossings with care
- Prepare to stop, turn off radio, fans and roll down windows
- Look and listen both ways, bend forward around mirrors
- Do not proceed if your mixer truck will not fit completely on the other side and without stopping
- Look again in both directions
- Cross in the highest gear that will let you cross without shifting
- Keep going once you start (even if the lights start flashing)



If You Get Stuck on the Tracks

Get out immediately and move away in a 45-degree angle in the direction of an oncoming train. Locate the emergency phone number and call (or 911) with your exact location.

Resources

FMCSA: [7 Steps for Safety – Highway-Rail Grade Crossings](#)

NHTSA: [Always Expect a Train!](#)

NRMCA: [Railroad Crossing Safety](#)

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