FARMERS AND FARMING CONTRACTORS

• AGRICULTURAL USERS •

THE **SAFE** USE OF UNATTENDED RAILWAY LEVEL CROSSINGS

SEE **TRACKS?** THINK **TRAIN!**

Iarnród Éireann
Irish Rail

Level Crossings are dangerous places –

Stop, Look, Listen, Live!

An Unattended Railway Level Crossing is one where the user opens and shuts the gates.

These level crossings are also commonly known as Accommodation Level Crossings. Some of them are located on public roads.

This booklet does not necessarily cover every situation that may arise in the course of using a level crossing.

It is the responsibility of the user to ensure that it is safe to cross and that the railway and other users of the railway are not endangered.

Knowing the Dangers

- Trains travel fast and cannot stop suddenly. A fast train may take between 1/2 mile and one mile to stop.
- Shut and fasten all gates at all times. Leaving gates open can result in children or animals wandering on to the line and may encourage unsuspecting drivers of vehicles to go straight on to the level crossing before checking that it is safe to do so. Unfamiliar crossing users or visiting public are more at risk when using Unattended Railway Level Crossings.
- Trains can be very silent and this is particularly the case on modern continuously welded rails. Be very careful in windy weather as wind can mask the noise of approaching trains. Deafness, the use of earbuds or headphones and the use of car radios will affect your ability to hear approaching trains. Remember the wearing of ear protectors will also affect your ability to hear trains. Mobile phones must not be used during the process of working the crossing.
- Be aware that weather conditions such as mist, fog, or snow, as well as vegetation growth may affect the warning you receive of approaching trains.
- Crossing the line with slow, heavy, low-slung or cumbersome vehicles, vehicles conveying dangerous substances and with herds of animals needs special protection.
- Always be very careful during the hours of darkness as confusion may arise between the lights of approaching cars and trains.
- Every time you cross the railway remember the **Stop, Look, Listen** rule.

WHEN CROSSING, FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN ON SIGNAGE DISPLAYED AT THE LEVEL CROSSING

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DRIVING TRACTORS ACROSS THE RAILWAY

Make sure that

- the tractor, including trailer, is in good mechanical condition and unlikely to stall on the crossing.
- the handbrake is in good working order.
- the cab windows are not fogged up inside and that all windows are clear of snow, ice and dirt and that nothing is blocking your view.

- **Open** at least one window before crossing.
- **Turn off** all radios, stereos and the like and remove any earbuds or headphones. Noise may mask the sound of an approaching train. Mobile phones must not be used during the process of working the crossing.
- Remember the wearing of ear protectors will reduce your ability to hear trains. Protectors should be removed when driving across the line.
- Ensure that no tow-hitch or other attachment will foul the railway line as you traverse the level crossing.
- Be aware of any dangers that the level crossing may hold for you.

- **STOP** clear of the railway line where you get a good view along the track in both directions.
  LOOK for the approach of trains, especially in poor visibility or at night.Watch out for the light on an approaching train.
  LISTEN for horns or the sound of an approaching train.
  When using the level crossing, open both gates before attempting to bring a vehicle across the railway line.
  Open the opposite gate first.

- Use the black and yellow marker posts, where provided, when stopping. Make sure that equipment, such as buckets, grabs, forks and the like, attached to the front of the tractor does not protrude beyond the marked posts. If there are no black and yellow markers posts then stop in such a manner that **no part of the tractor or its load** is closer than 2 metres (6 feet) to the nearest rail.
- Great care must be taken when driving a tractor which is carrying a load on its forks. A number of dangers may arise. When going down a slope towards the railway or when travelling over a change in gradient the load could shift and fall off. The load may fall on to the railway line, obstructing it. Under severe conditions the tractor may even turn over if care is not taken. When a tractor is being driven over the railway line with loaded forks it is necessary to have another person in attendance. A helper should assist the driver in keeping a look out for trains and should make sure that the load being carried does not obstruct in any way the path of a passing train. Look out for any unevenness in the crossing surface that could upset the load.
- If in doubt, ring the number displayed on the red and yellow sign for further information.

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- Should a tractor suffer a breakdown or become grounded on the level crossing, make sure that everybody gets out and gets clear of the railway line, then telephone or otherwise warn of the danger **immediately** by the best possible means.
- Having used the level crossing, make certain that both gates have been shut and fastened.

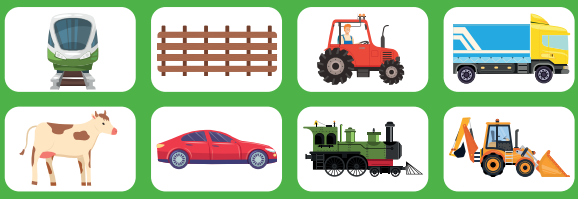
UNUSUAL MOVEMENTS ACROSS RAILWAY LEVEL CROSSINGS

Contact Iarnród Éireann beforehand if you are:

- Driving an awkward vehicle – for example, a long, low, wide, heavy or slow vehicle
- Moving vehicles with dangerous, unusual or very heavy loads
- Crossing the railway when herding animals

Use the phone number which you will find at the railway crossing.

If you are driving a very high vehicle and using a railway crossing with overhead electrified lines, such as on the DART network, please note that the general safe head-room is 5 metres.



HOW TO HERD ANIMALS SAFELY ACROSS THE RAILWAY

- The movement of a herd of cattle (i.e. more than two animals) should be carefully planned. Information on train times may be obtained from Iarnród Éireann. In the case of bullocks and other very unpredictable animals the movement must be preplanned and permission to cross the line must be obtained from Iarnród Éireann, in advance and in good time.
- The movement of other animals, including horses and hunt and hounds, must follow the same requirements.
- Remember animals of different types and breeds behave in differing ways. Different animals will require varied handling procedures such as the use of holding pens adjacent to the crossing.
- At least two people must be in charge when animals which are easily controlled, are being driven across the line. This includes dairy cattle, pigs, sheep and other animals. Such people are necessary to keep a look-out for trains, and to assist the safe passage of such animals, singly or in herds or in flocks, over the crossing.

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- Where permitted, dairy cattle may be "drifted" across the railway in single file. When making a movement with dairy cattle, you should be ready to cut off the line of animals the moment you see a train approaching. This is done by closing the gate through which access to the railway was gained.

- Bullocks and other animals of a nervous disposition need special handling. At least three people must be in charge, except where the crossing is provided with fencing/holding pens and cattle grids which cut off access along the railway track, when two people must control the movement. Such movements should be preplanned with prior communication with Iarnród Éireann regarding the proposed movement across the level crossing. See the end of this booklet for telephone numbers.

- Never attempt to start a movement of animals across the line unless you know that you can complete it or curtail it safely and in time. Information on train movements, and permission in advance, as required, may be obtained from Iarnród Éireann, see telephone number at crossings.

- If an animal or animals stray or escape on to the railway either through a gap in a fence or by means of an open gate always advise Iarnród Éireann immediately. See telephone number at crossing.

DRIVING, SLOW, HEAVY, LOW-SLUNG AND CUMBERSOME VEHICLES ACROSS THE RAILWAY

- You must obtain permission to cross the railway line from Iarnród Éireann in advance and in good time. You should advise the type of vehicle you intend bringing across the line and you should also advise the likely duration of the movement as special arrangements may have to be made for the safe use of the level crossing. Always advise Iarnród Éireann when the level crossing has been safely traversed.
- **Never** attempt to cross the railway with a vehicle which may ground on the railway line. You could cause a **serious accident**. You may also cause delays to train services while the problem is being resolved.
- Safe passage with an unladen trailer does not guarantee that all will be well on the return journey, if the vehicle is laden.
- Make sure that the level crossing gates are sufficiently wide for the vehicle to pass without becoming jammed and without damaging either the gates or their supports.

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SPECIAL FARM ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS SILAGE MAKING, HAY MAKING AND HARVESTING, NECESSITATING REPEATED MOVEMENTS ACROSS THE RAILWAY

- If you intend undertaking an activity, such as silage making, involving repeated movements of vehicles across the railway, then you should make prior arrangements with Iarnród Éireann to have special **protection** provided. Give at least 48 hours notice.

- No such movements may take place across the railway until the special protection, which could involve the provision of an Iarnród Éireann flagman, is in place. All instructions given by the flagman must be fully obeyed at all times in relation to the crossing of the line.

- If you employ outside contractors to carry out work of any kind then the above arrangements must apply, and it is your responsibility to see that the contractor is fully aware of the safety requirements at the crossing. Supply the contractor with a copy of this booklet. The crossing of members of the public at field to field crossings is not allowed as it is not a normal agricultural active.

- Where the current widening agreement has been entered into, Iarnród Éireann will pay 50% of the flagman cost.

ALWAYS EXPECT A TRAIN

CONTACT US

This brochure can be downloaded from our website **www.irishrail.ie**.

For enquiries regarding the level crossing you use, or reporting damage to a level crossing infrastructure, contact the relevant Infrastructure Manager in your area:

ATHLONE
Covers the West of the country
090 648 7711

DUBLIN
Covers the North, East and South East of the country
01 703 3651

LIMERICK JUNCTION
Covers the South and South West of the country
062 51083

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ALWAYS EXPECT A TRAIN

STOP, LOOK BOTH WAYS, LISTEN

WHEN THE RAILWAY IS CLEAR, CROSS QUICKLY

SHUT AND FASTEN THE GATES AFTER YOU – IT'S THE LAW!

REMEMBER
NEVER EVER STOP ON THE RAILWAY
AND ALWAYS EXPECT A TRAIN

- ALWAYS EXPECT A TRAIN
- CROSS SAFELY
- ALWAYS SHUT THE GATES AFTER YOU

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