



LOUISIANA HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMISSION NEWS RELEASE

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LHSC reminds drivers to stop for approaching trains

Baton Rouge – The Louisiana Highway Safety Commission wants to remind drivers to make the right choice at railroad crossings and always stop for approaching trains.

Nationally and in Louisiana, railroad-crossing fatalities spiked in 2016, the last year for which verified statistics are available. Across the country, 266 people died at railroad crossings in 2016, representing a 16 percent increase from 2015.

In 2016, the Highway Safety Research Group at LSU reported seven fatal train crashes and 32 crashes involving injuries in Louisiana. In 2015, Louisiana reported two fatal train crashes and 28 injury crashes.

"It is easy for a driver to misjudge a train's speed and distance from a crossing, and that can lead to a tragic situation," said LHSC Executive Director Lisa Freeman. "The LHSC is joining the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's campaign to remind drivers to stop if a train is approaching. It simply isn't worth the risk to try to beat a train."

Of the 130,000 public railroad crossings in the United States, roughly 54 percent are "active" crossings that include warning devices such as gates, bells or flashing lights to alert drivers of an approaching train. About 46 percent are "passive" crossings, where only signs and markings are present.

Follow these tips to stay safe near train tracks:

- When approaching the crossing, slow down, look and listen for a train on the tracks.
- Look in both directions before crossing.
- Do not guess when a train is coming. Trains can come from either direction at any time.
- Never race a train.
- Before crossing, make sure there is enough room on the other side of the tracks to cross completely and safely.
- Be aware that you may need to cross multiple sets of tracks at some railroad crossings.
- Never stop on the tracks, and to avoid stalling, never shift gears on the tracks.
- If your vehicle stalls on a track, quickly move away from the track and your vehicle at a 45-degree angle. Call the number on the Emergency Notification System (ENS) sign, or if the ENS sign is not visible to you, dial 911 for help.

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