

TRA

MPT

SCHOOL BUS DRIVER

INSTRUCTOR

FACILITATION

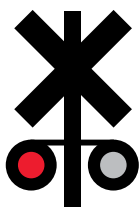
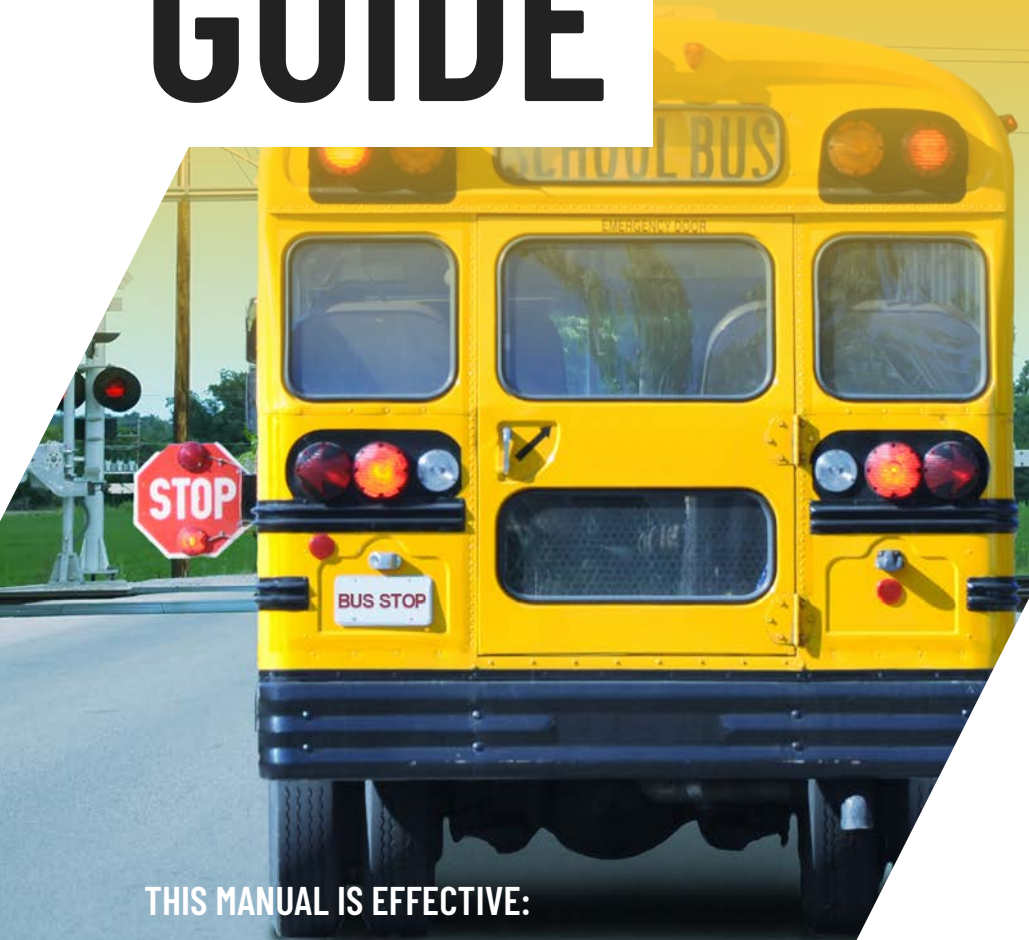


RAILSING
CROSSROAD



LOW GROUND
CLEARANCE

GUIDE



**OPERATION
LIFESAVER®**

Rail Safety Education

THIS MANUAL IS EFFECTIVE:
JULY 2024



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NOTE: It is recommended that these materials are used to supplement your district training efforts. Please note State and Local Laws may vary. Follow your agency and district protocols.



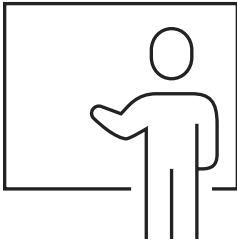
INTRODUCTION:

DECIDE SMART,

ARRIVE SAFE

***DECIDE SMART, ARRIVE SAFE* WAS DEVELOPED IN CONSULTATION WITH TRANSPORTATION AGENCIES AND STATE TRAINING COORDINATORS.**

Operation Lifesaver, Inc. (OLI) is a national, non-profit, public education program dedicated to ending collisions, deaths and injuries at highway-rail grade crossings and along railroad rights-of-way. OLI has ongoing statewide programs in 47 states and the District of Columbia. To learn more, request a free rail safety presentation and connect with your Operation Lifesaver State Coordinator, visit OLI.ORG.



GOAL OF TRAINING

Keeping with OLI's goal of eliminating collisions, injuries and fatalities at highway-rail crossings, this training features four videos to supplement school bus driver training. Drivers will learn to recognize and respond to railroad signs and symbols, learn key facts about trains to make informed decisions, hear from real school bus drivers about what they do behind the wheel and explore **5 Alive!**, a drill that helps drivers to *Decide Smart, Arrive Safe*. This training is not meant to replace other training but to enhance existing driver training specific to safely crossing tracks.

OPTIONAL INTRODUCTION ACTIVITY

At the beginning of training, give participants a chance to get to know one another.

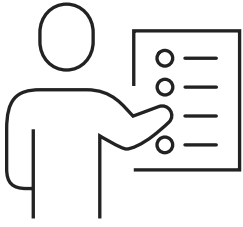
DIRECT PARTICIPANTS TO:

- Raise your RIGHT hand if you crossed railroad tracks to get here today.
- Raise your LEFT hand if you DID NOT cross railroad tracks to get here today.

Ask participants to look around, determining how conscious of railroad crossings your participants are.

SAY:

Today, I'm here to help you **know the facts, so you can make safe choices.**



BREAKDOWN

This training can be viewed together in its entirety or broken up topically for individual review and discussion. Times listed below include module viewing and engagement activities:



KNOW THE SIGNS AND SIGNALS:
12 MINUTES



KNOW THE FACTS:
6 MINUTES



IN THEIR OWN WORDS:
12 MINUTES



5 ALIVE!:
10 MINUTES



SAFETY QUIZ:
10 MINUTES



"WHAT WOULD YOU DO?"
OPTIONAL DISCUSSION: 10 MINUTES



KNOW THE SIGNS

AND SIGNALS

RECOGNIZING RAILROAD

SIGNS AND SYMBOLS

INTRODUCTION

Choose one of the following discussion topics to begin a dialogue:

1. **When you come up to a railroad crossing, who has the right-of-way?**
ANSWER: *Trains have the right-of-way.*

2. **What is the meaning of *containment*? How do you measure the containment area?**
ANSWER: *Do you have enough room in the front and rear of your school bus to fully clear the tracks? The containment area can be found by adding 30 feet to the length of your bus.*

GOAL

Upon reviewing, the goal is for participants to recognize and name the signs and name the parts of a railroad crossing.

PROCEDURE

Watch video.

POST-VIDEO REVIEW

Tell me briefly what each sign or marking means:

- Stop Line
- Advance Warning Sign
- Crossbuck Sign
- Multiple Track Sign
- Exempt Sign
- Emergency Notification System (ENS) Sign
- Low Ground Clearance Sign



STOP LINE

This pavement marking indicates the place where your school bus should stop before the tracks.

NOTE: *Not all crossings have a stop line. If there is no stop line, stop no closer than 15 feet and no farther than 50 feet from the nearest rail.*



ADVANCE WARNING SIGN

This is your first visual marker that you are approaching a railroad crossing.



CROSSBUCK SIGN

You are about to cross a railroad crossing. This sign designates the only safe and legal place to cross railroad tracks. Be prepared to stop!



MULTIPLE TRACKS SIGN

This sign indicates the number of tracks you will cross. Be extra careful and check all directions before crossing.



EXEMPT SIGN

In some states, school buses can cross without stopping. **You must check with your agency and follow their protocols.**



EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM (ENS) SIGN

To report emergencies and malfunctions, call the number on the ENS sign. No ENS sign? Call 911.

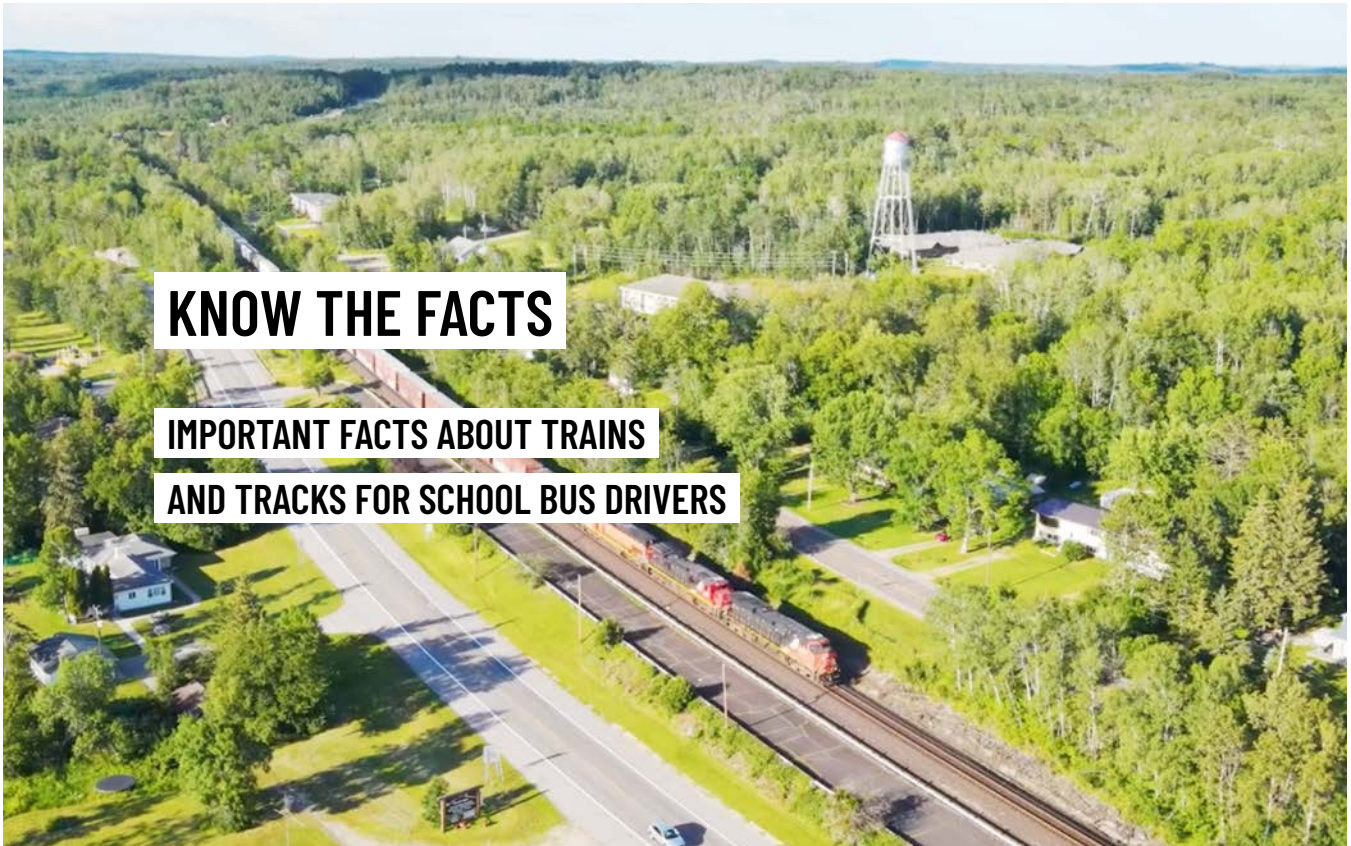
THE BLUE AND WHITE SIGN SHARES:

- The emergency contact phone number.
- USDOT Grade crossing number, a unique crossing identification number.



LOW GROUND CLEARANCE SIGN

Contact your supervisor for a possible alternate route as well as agency protocols.



KNOW THE FACTS

IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT TRAINS AND TRACKS FOR SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS



Freight trains don't run on a schedule.



**Trains are much closer
than they appear.**

Know the facts about trains!

INTRODUCTION

Ask:

1. **Do you think freight trains follow a schedule?**
ANSWER: Freight trains don't run on a schedule. Always expect a train!
2. **Is there a way to know ahead of time when a train is coming through a crossing?**
ANSWER: No! Trains can run on any track, at any time, from either direction.

GOAL

Upon reviewing, the goal is for participants to learn rail-related facts and identify the impact these facts have on driving a school bus.

PROCEDURE

Watch video.

REVIEW

Ask participants to recall whether the statement is true or false:

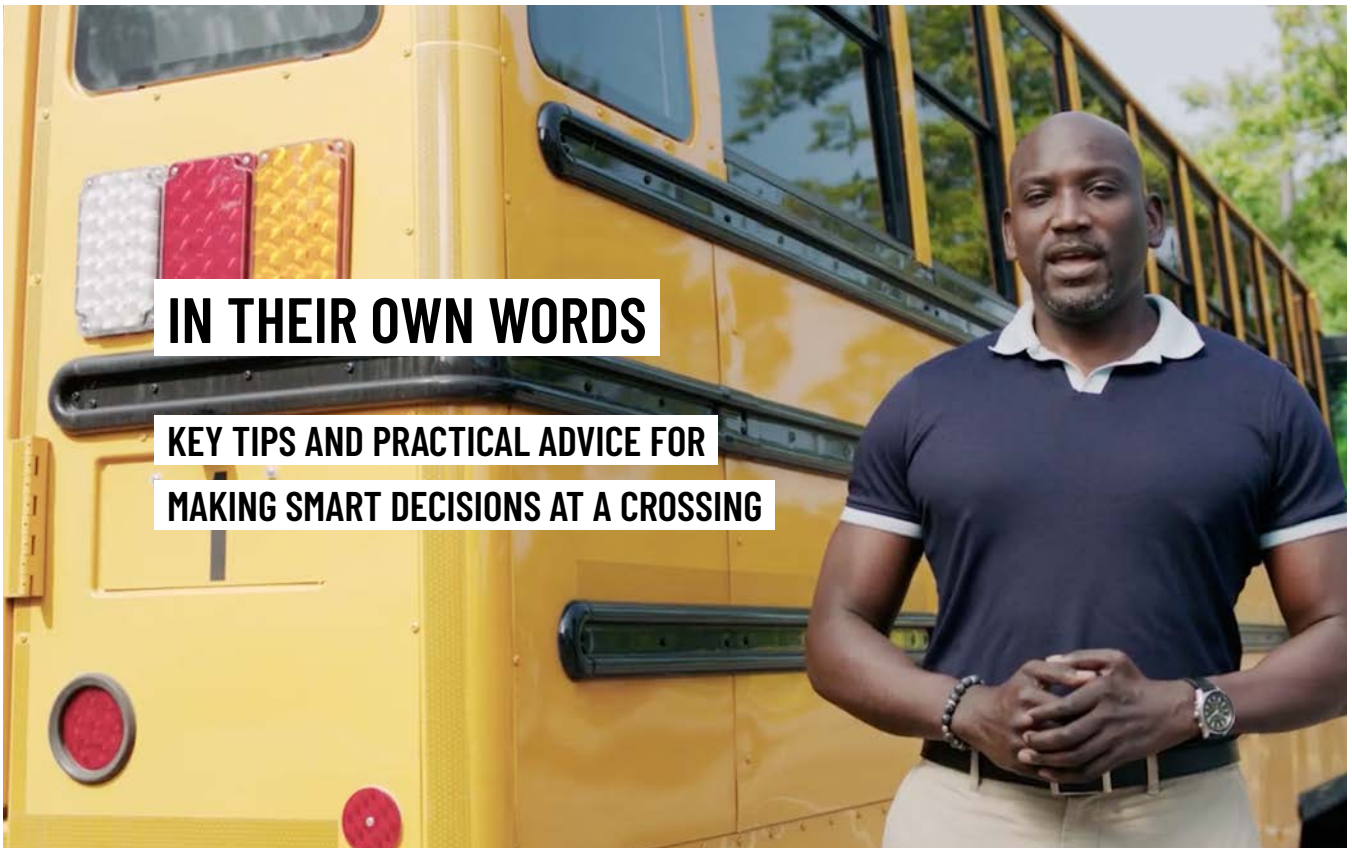
1. **Every 3 hours in the U.S., a person or vehicle is hit by a train.**
TRUE: Over half of these incidents occur at active crossings where there are lights or gates.
LESSON EXTENSION: Insert your state's incident statistics (contact your State Coordinator to get this information).
2. **Transit trains in the U.S. can reach speeds over 110 mph.**
TRUE: Don't drive around gates, don't stand on tracks.
3. **It can take up to a mile or more for trains to come to a full and complete stop.**
TRUE: Trains can't stop quickly!
4. **Trains can run on any track, at any time, from either direction.**
TRUE: Look both ways and listen carefully.
5. **Trains have no steering wheel; trains cannot swerve**
TRUE: Trains can only run on tracks.
6. **Trains are heavy.**
TRUE: 400 loaded school buses = 1 average train (12 million pounds or 6 thousand tons)



Transit can reach speeds over 110 miles per hour.



The average train is the same weight as 400 loaded school buses.



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

**KEY TIPS AND PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR
MAKING SMART DECISIONS AT A CROSSING**



In Their Own Words: Cindy



In Their Own Words: Samantha



In Their Own Words: Alan

INTRODUCTION

Ask the following question to highlight the topics found in this module:

Do you have an opportunity to check out your route before carrying students across the tracks?

ANSWER: *Districts often give driver's the opportunity to run through the route they will be driving.*

GOAL

Upon reviewing, the goal is for participants to be able to describe the considerations they must be mindful of when approaching, stopping and crossing at a railroad crossing. State and local laws may vary. Follow your agency and district protocols.

PROCEDURE

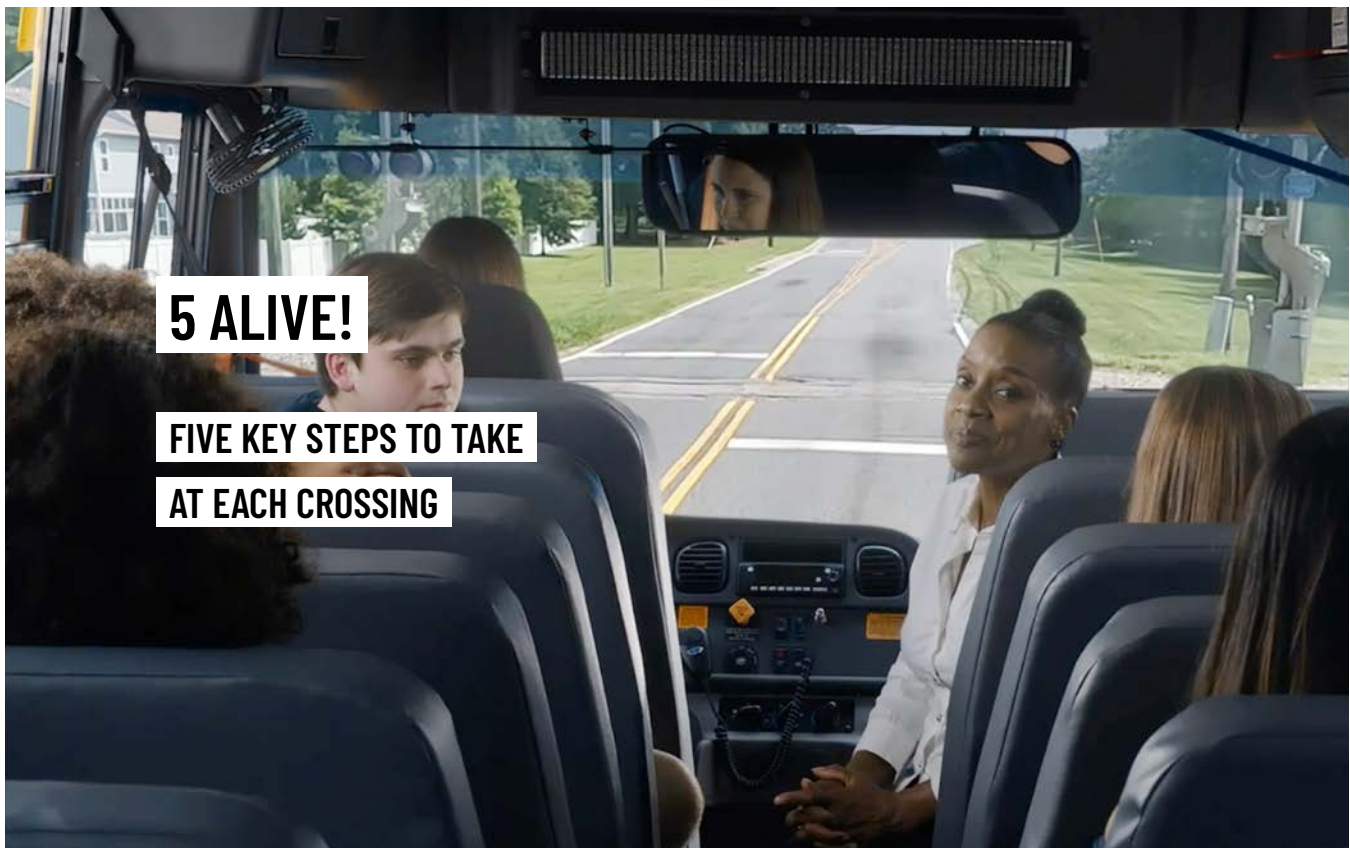
Watch video.

REVIEW

- When coming up to a crossing, turn your hazard lights on and tap your brakes to warn cars behind you that you will be stopping the school bus.
- Open your driver's side window and use your noise-canceling components.
- While stopped, look and listen carefully in each direction for approaching trains.
- Move your head and shoulders to see around obstructions while maintaining assured clear distance.
- Check again for traffic around you before you start to move at a crossing.
- Remember to keep your windows open, hazard lights on and noise cancellation activated until fully clear of the tracks.
- Plan for an emergency evacuation:** If your school bus stalls or is stuck on the tracks or you are required to evacuate your school bus for any reason, review these steps:
 - Know before you go.** Scout your route. Write down the crossing number of any crossing along your route before the school year starts. Note the safest location at each crossing where you would direct riders in the event of an evacuation.
 - Plan** how you would evacuate the school bus considering all points of exit.
 - When evacuating,** get the riders out quickly, and without panic. Have a designated place to meet.
 - Once everyone is safely evacuated, if no train is approaching, follow your agency's emergency protocols including when possible calling the number on the Blue and White ENS sign and giving the unique crossing ID number. No Blue and White ENS sign? Call 911.
 - If a train is approaching, direct riders to run **AWAY FROM THE TRACKS** toward the train at a 45-degree angle to avoid debris.

DECISIONS DRIVERS SHOULD MAKE BEFORE RESUMING TRAVEL:

- Make sure there is enough room on the other side of the track for your whole vehicle.
If you don't fit, don't commit!
- Look beyond the tracks to see if there is traffic congestion, a signal or STOP sign at a highway-intersection up ahead. Is the space large enough for you to completely clear the crossing? Allow for your vehicles overhang and remember that trains overhang the track.



INTRODUCTION

With everything you're tasked with remembering, here's **5 Alive!** key safety steps.

GOAL

Upon reviewing, the goal is for participants to identify and practice a series of 5 actions to prepare to cross the tracks.

PROCEDURE

Watch video

REVIEW

1. **Prepare to stop!** Slow down!
2. **Minimize distractions!** Use your noise canceling components.
3. **Come to a full and complete stop.** Stop no closer than 15 feet and no further than 50 feet from the crossing. Open the driver's side window and student entrance door if that is your protocol. Look both ways and listen for a train.
4. **Prepare to cross.** Lean forward, looking both ways again.
5. **Proceed across the tracks when it is safe.** Do not switch gears, be sure that your school bus can fully cross the tracks before choosing to go!

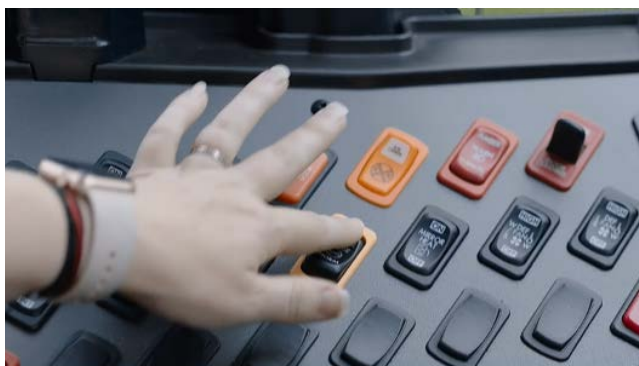
NOTE: State and local laws may vary. Always follow your agency and district protocols.



1. Prepare to stop!



5. Proceed across the tracks when it is safe.



2. Minimize distractions!



3. Come to a full and complete stop.



4. Prepare to cross.

QUIZ AND ANSWER KEY



1. This sign tells me:

- a. I stop at this sign.
- b. No train runs here.
- c. I slow down, knowing I am approaching a railroad crossing.**
- d. I look and listen for trains and then move forward.



2. This sign tells me:

- a. I expect to see a train at this crossing.
- b. I must yield to a train, and if I'm driving a school bus, come to a full and complete stop.
- c. I know that if I see an upside-down T-shape sign, this tells me how many tracks I will cross.
- d. All of the above.**

3. I should ensure that my school bus stops no closer than _____ feet from a track.

- a. 15 feet**
- b. 25 feet
- c. 50 feet
- d. 3 feet

4. I can call the number on the Emergency Notification System sign:

- a. If I'm stalled on the tracks.
- b. If there is something on the tracks.
- c. If the lights or gates are malfunctioning.
- d. All of the above.**

5. If I'm stalled or stuck, my priority is:

- a. Finding the ENS sign.
- b. Evacuating the school bus.**
- c. Stopping and restarting the school bus again.
- d. All of the above.

6. I should know my evacuation protocols and consider _____ evacuation points.

- a. Front
- b. Back
- c. Roof
- d. Window
- e. All available**

7. I should know the length of my vehicle. A typical school school bus is _____ feet long.

- a. 25
- b. 35
- c. 45**
- d. 55

8. When multiple tracks are present I only go when _____.

- a. I can clear all tracks with no overhang.**
- b. I can clear the first set of tracks.
- c. I can see the other side of the tracks.
- d. All of the above.

9. As I approach the tracks, the first thing to do is:
- a. Activate my hazards.
 - b. Silence all noise.
 - c. Both A and B.**
 - d. Neither A or B.
10. A pre-trip inspection may include:
- a. Ensuring all lights work.
 - b. Reviewing my route sheet.
 - c. Both A and B.**
 - d. Neither A or B.
11. One way to ensure I am fully clear of the tracks is:
- a. To count to 15 while driving over the tracks.
 - b. To look in the rearview mirror and clearly see the tracks behind my school bus.**
 - c. To pull forward at least one car length.
 - d. All of the above can help me see that I am fully clear of the tracks.
12. The only safe and legal place to cross railroad tracks is at a designated crossing.
- a. True**
 - b. False
13. Every 3 hours in the U.S., a person or vehicle is hit by a train.
- a. True**
 - b. False
14. A transit train in the U.S. can reach over 110 miles per hour.
- a. True**
 - b. False
15. It can take a mile or more for a freight train to come to a full and complete stop.
- a. True**
 - b. False
16. Trains can run on any track, at any time, from either direction.
- a. True**
 - b. False
17. Trains don't have steering wheels and can only run on the track.
- a. True**
 - b. False
18. If you don't fit, don't commit.
- a. True**
 - b. False
19. State and federal highway laws concerning school buses crossing railroad tracks can differ by state and locality.
- a. True**
 - b. False
20. Put the following 5 Alive! statements in order:
- 2 Minimize distractions.
 - 4 Prepare to cross.
 - 1 Prepare to stop.
 - 3 Come to a full and complete stop.
 - 5 Proceed across while looking and listening.

"WHAT WOULD YOU DO?" OPTIONAL DISCUSSION



STORAGE AND CONTAINMENT AREA: WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Narrative: Imagine you're driving a new route. You've read over the route sheet and know that you will cross over railroad tracks. You've met your student helper and are slowing your school bus to approach the crossing. Your favorite song is on the radio and the kids at the back of the school bus are talking loudly. You approach the railroad crossing, completed the safety steps to cross but notice a lot of traffic backing up. It's your turn to cross over the tracks. Some considerations might be:

1. Have I silenced all possible noise to listen for a train?
2. Can my school bus clear all tracks? If I don't fit, I don't commit!
3. Will any piece of my school bus overhang the tracks? I need to know the length of my school bus to decide if I can fully clear the track.



OBSTRUCTED VIEW: WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Narrative: The weather is foggy this morning and you have started your school bus route late. You want to make up some time and hope that no riders are dawdling. You are driving the speed limit and following all traffic signs and symbols. You start to drive past the Advanced Warning sign, something you see every day. You rarely give it a thought and by routine know that you are approaching a railroad track. You hope there is no train because you really want to make up some time.

List the order of things you consider.



USING THE ENS SIGN: WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Narrative: As you are waiting at a gate, you come to believe that the gate has malfunctioned. You've never waited this long and the traffic behind you is honking for you to move. Other traffic is driving around lowered gates.

What should you do?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. Learn more about Operation Lifesaver, Inc.: [OLI.ORG](https://www.oli.org)
2. Learn more about the ENS sign: [Vimeo.COM/323775614](https://vimeo.com/323775614)
3. Railroad statistics in your state: [OLI.ORG/TRACK-STATISTICS](https://www.oli.org/track-statistics)
4. Connect with Operation Lifesaver in your state: [OLI.ORG/STATE-COORDINATORS](https://www.oli.org/state-coordinators)
5. Follow us on social:



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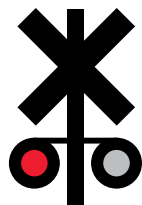
**HELP STOP
TRACK TRAGEDIES**

**Know the facts.
Make good decisions.
Share the message.**

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