



Home | About Us | Contact Us | News | Media | Community and Environment | Performance

Resource Library | Careers

News Releases: National

USA SCORES HIGHEST IN LEVEL CROSSING DEATHS

Tuesday 22 Jun 2010 01:00

As fans across the world are praying their team wins through in South Africa, a different sort of league table of countries involved in the World Cup, published today, shows a tragic tally of fatalities of those killed at railway level crossings.

45 countries are today coordinating awareness raising activities as part of International Level Crossing Day of Action. Hundreds of people are killed globally every year, after taking chances by running red lights, swerving barriers or ignoring warning signs.

Country	Fatalities 2009
USA	248
Argentina	126
Germany	40
Australia	37 (average per year)
France	36
Slovakia	26
Portugal	17
Spain	16
Britain	13
Slovenia	11
Serbia	8
Switzerland	7
Italy	5

* Figures supplied by the International Union of Railways who coordinate the 'action day'. Not all 45 countries figures available

In Britain, Network Rail and the British Transport Police have organised awareness days at more than a dozen locations across the country, where community safety managers and police officers will be on hand to give advice and warn motorists and pedestrians of the dangers of misusing crossings.

Martin Gallagher, Network Rail's head of community safety said: "We have a good safety record in comparison to many other countries but even one death is one too many. Jumping the lights and ignoring warning signs is sadly a sight we see all too often. Level

crossings are safe, but if misused, they all pose very real risks.

"Today's international action day gives us another opportunity to drive home the message that running the risk at a level crossing is just not worth it. By trying to save a few seconds, you could end up seriously hurt or losing your life."

British Transport Police chief superintendent Chief Superintendent Eamonn Carroll said: "BTP, in partnership with Network Rail, has made advances in influencing driver behaviour and making them aware of the dangers associated with risking lives at level crossings. Our officers will be deployed at crossings across the country today in order to reinforce that message."

Notes to Editors:

International Level Crossing Day of Action is organised by ILCAD.

ILCAD involves a number of partners from road sector, local authorities, railway partners, BTP, local Police forces, European Transport Safety Council, European Railway Agency, Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER), European Rail Infrastructure Managers (EIM), European Level Crossing Forum (ELCF) and International Union of Railways.

This year UN-ECE Transport Division, the Latin American Railway Association (ALAF) and the Australasian Railway Association (ARA) have joined the campaign.

Participating countries will be carrying out a number of initiatives including awareness events at level crossings, visits to schools, driving schools as well as displaying posters. Some countries will also be broadcasting special safety messages on radio and television.

Network Rail/BTP awareness days are being held at the following locations:

Ardrossan Harbour/Town

Beverley Station

Bloxwich, Walsall

Blythe Bridge (Staffs)

Brodie/Forress/Elgin

Cleghorn

Cornton/Blackford/Whitemoss

Croxton (Cambs)

Dingwall/Garve/Brora

Enfield Lock

Kingsnowe

Llanelli East

Mitcham Eastfields

Poole

Red Cow (Exeter)

FACTS ABOUT LEVEL CROSSINGS

- Level crossings are safe if used correctly
- 95% of accidents at level crossings are caused by misuse or error– i.e. drivers ignoring red signals, barriers and klaxons
- There are over 7,600 level crossings both on public and private land that cut across the UK railway network.

Britain - National level crossing incidents - 2009:

- 3,242 recorded incidents of misuse or error (2008 = 3479)
- 14 collisions between vehicles and trains (2008 = 20)
- 13 deaths (2008 = 15)
- 140 near misses between motor vehicles and trains = nearly 3 a week

DON'T RUN THE RISK CAMPAIGN

Network Rail has a public safety awareness campaign on level crossings - Don't Run the Risk. The campaign has been running since 2006 and includes hard hitting TV and radio advertising that illustrates in graphic detail the tragic consequences of misusing level crossings by both motorists and pedestrians.

The campaign runs in parallel with other Network Rail and industry initiatives to minimise the safety risk at level crossings. These include:

- Network Rail's dedicated community safety team which aims to reduce railway crime and provide young people with positive activities to fill their time
- Development of solutions which could lead to the replacement of some crossings
- Development of obstacle detection systems
- Developing better and cost-effective ways of detecting and recording level crossings misuse
- Working with the Police and Crown Prosecution Service to improve the prosecution of offenders

THE HIGHWAY CODELevel crossings

291A level crossing is where a road crosses a railway or tramway line. Approach and cross it with care. Never drive onto a crossing until the road is clear on the other side and do not get too close to the car in front. Never stop or park on, or near, a crossing.

292 Overhead electric lines. It is dangerous to touch overhead electric lines. You **MUST** obey the safe height warning road signs and you should not continue forward onto the railway if your vehicle touches any height barrier or bells. The clearance available is usually 5 metres (16 feet 6 inches) but may be lower.

[Laws RTA 1988 sect 36, TSRGD 2002 reg 17(5)]

293 Controlled crossings. Most crossings have traffic light signals with a steady amber light, twin flashing red stop lights and an audible alarm for pedestrians.

They may have full, half or no barriers.

- you **MUST** always obey the flashing red stop lights
- you **MUST** stop behind the white line across the road
- keep going if you have already crossed the white line when the amber light comes on
- do not reverse onto or over a controlled crossing

- you **MUST** wait if a train goes by and the red lights continue to flash. This means another train will be passing soon
- only cross when the lights go off and barriers open
- never zig-zag around half-barriers, they lower automatically because a train is approaching
- at crossings where there are no barriers, a train is approaching when the lights show

[Laws RTA 1988 sect 36 & TSRGD regs 10 & 40]

294 Railway telephones. If you are driving a large or slow-moving vehicle, a long, low vehicle with a risk of grounding, or herding animals, a train could arrive before you are clear of the crossing. You **MUST** obey any sign instructing you to use the railway telephone to obtain permission to cross. You **MUST** also telephone when clear of the crossing if requested to do so.

[Laws RTA 1988 sect 36 & TSRGD regs 10 & 16(1)]

295 Crossings without traffic lights. Vehicles should stop and wait at the barrier or gate when it begins to close and not cross until the barrier or gate opens.

296 User-operated gates or barriers. Some crossings have 'Stop' signs and small red and green lights. You **MUST NOT** cross when the red light is showing, only cross if the green light is on. If crossing with a vehicle, you should

- open the gates or barriers on both sides of the crossing
- check that the green light is still on and cross quickly
- close the gates or barriers when you are clear of the crossing

[Laws RTA 1988 sect 36 & TSRGD regs 10 & 52(2)]

297 If there are no lights, follow the procedure in Rule 295. Stop, look both ways and listen before you cross. If there is a railway telephone, always use it to contact the signal operator to make sure it is safe to cross. Inform the signal operator again when you are clear of the crossing.

298 Open crossings. These have no gates, barriers, attendant or traffic lights but will have a 'Give Way' sign. You should look both ways, listen and make sure there is no train coming before you cross.

299 Incidents and breakdowns. If your vehicle breaks down, or if you have an incident on a crossing you should

- get everyone out of the vehicle and clear of the crossing immediately
- use a railway telephone if available to tell the signal operator. Follow the instructions you are given
- move the vehicle clear of the crossing if there is time before a train arrives. If the alarm sounds, or the amber light comes on, leave the vehicle and get clear of the crossing immediately

For more information please contact :

Media Relations (National)
t:020 3356 8700
e: mediarelations@networkrail.co.uk

About Network Rail

Network Rail is the 'not for dividend' owner and operator of Britain's railway infrastructure, which includes the tracks, signals, tunnels, bridges, viaducts, level crossings and stations - the largest of which we also manage. We aim to provide a safe, reliable and efficient rail infrastructure for freight and passenger trains to use. Our website: www.networkrail.co.uk

