

# Rail Safety

## Tips for Bicyclists



Attention Bike Riders! Operation Lifesaver Inc. (OLI) and its safety partners – the Federal Railroad Administration, Federal Highway Administration and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration – want you to be alert when bicycling near and/or crossing railroad tracks.

**Remember: It's never safe or legal to bike on a railroad right-of-way, and designated crossings are the only places it is legal for bicyclists, pedestrians and vehicles to cross the tracks!**

### **Please keep these life-saving tips in mind:**

- Look out! When approaching a railroad crossing, ALWAYS expect a train – on any track, in any direction.
- As you approach a railroad crossing, pay attention to pavement markings and warning signs, including the crossbuck sign, stop sign, signs alerting you to road or pathway angles across the tracks, flashing lights and railroad crossing gates.
- Before you cross, LOOK in both directions. LISTEN for a train. PROCEED across the tracks only after you are sure that no trains are coming and no warning devices are activated.

**ALWAYS EXPECT A TRAIN**



## Important Tips for Safe Biking Around Rails & Trains

- Don't allow your bike wheels to get caught in the rails. It's always safest to dismount and walk your bike across the tracks. If riding, cross perpendicular (at a 90-degree angle) to the tracks. Never ride your bike over the tracks at less than a 45-degree angle.
- Did you know that an optical illusion makes trains seem farther away and slower moving than they really are? Never take chances by trying to "beat the train" across the tracks!
- If you see or hear a train coming, or if the warning lights start flashing and/or the crossing gates begin to lower, **SLOW DOWN AND STOP** a safe distance (at least 15 feet) from the railroad tracks.
- Stay alert at crossings with more than one track. Even after a train passes, look and listen for other trains that may be moving along parallel tracks from either direction.
- Wet tracks are slippery. Be extra careful when crossing railroad tracks if the weather is rainy, foggy, icy or just plain wet.
- Dismount and walk your bike across the tracks if the crossing looks wet or otherwise hazardous. Step over the rails, not on them.
- Gravel or dirt service roads and the area nearby the tracks are usually railroad property. It is illegal – and dangerous – to ride your bike in these areas.
- Trains are wider than the tracks! Freight locomotives and railroad cars can extend by as much as three (3) feet beyond the rails on both sides. When a train is passing, stay at least 15 feet from the tracks, behind any gates or stop lines marked on the pavement.
- Some railroad crossings can be uneven and rough. Slow down and be careful. A bumpy crossing can cause a bicyclist to lose control, or to loosen bike accessories or cargo.
- By the time a train operator can see you on the tracks, it is too late to stop the train in time to avoid a collision. Obey all signs and signals and stay safe!

These safety tips are provided by California Operation Lifesaver (CAOL) and Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART) for informational purposes, and are not intended to be a complete list of all bicycle safety rules and regulations. CAOL is a chapter of the national/international non-profit organization Operation Lifesaver Inc., or OLI, which promotes education, enforcement and engineering efforts to keep people safe around railroad tracks and crossings in our communities.

Operation Lifesaver presenters are available to speak to biking clubs, school classrooms, youth or community service groups, company safety programs and other civic and recreational organizations. **To schedule a free rail safety presentation**, visit [www.caol.us](http://www.caol.us) and click on "Request a Presentation", or call (877) 827-2265. For additional rail safety tips and information, visit:

**[www.oli.org](http://www.oli.org)**



**LOOK. LISTEN. LIVE.**

