Did you know that a highway-rail grade crossing is considered an intersection?

The round yellow sign, called an Advance Warning Sign, warns drivers that the road intersects with railroad tracks ahead. This sign tells us to slow down and be prepared to stop if a train is approaching.

There is a no passing zone within 100 feet of the approach to a railroad crossing.

A stop line may be painted on paved roads in advance of the intersection and identifies the safe place to stop, if a train is approaching.

If there isn’t a stop line the driver must stop no closer than 15 feet and no farther than 50 feet from the closest rail.

A passive crossing is one that does not have flashing lights or automatic gates.

The crossbuck sign, the white X sign, is a regulatory sign that means Yield. Crossbuck signs are required at all public railroad crossings. The railroad companies install and maintain crossbuck signs.
Visual 13 – Passive Crossing Signs

- Some railroad crossings will have a stop or yield sign placed on the post holding the crossbuck, or on a separate post next to the crossbuck.

- If there is a yield sign, you must YIELD to all trains.

- If there is a stop sign, you must STOP, and then proceed when it is safe to do so.

- If there is no yield or stop sign, you must YIELD to all approaching trains.

- If your school district, company policy, or state law requires it, open the service door and driver’s window, then **LOOK** and **LISTEN** for an approaching train.
Visual 14 – No Train Horn

- Some communities have established Quiet Zones where the horn will not routinely sound.
- Make sure you look for “No Train Horn” signs that will be posted under the Advanced Warning Sign at Quiet Zone crossings.
- Remember: There may not be a train horn to warn you if a train is approaching.
- Always obey the signs and signals at all grade crossings, whether you are driving or walking across the tracks at a designated crossing.

**Additional Talking Points**

If someone in the audience wants ANY additional information concerning Quiet Zones, please refer to the following talking point.

- If you would like information on the Federal Train Horn Rule and Quiet Zones, please visit [www.fra.dot.gov](http://www.fra.dot.gov)
Visual 15 – Active Warning Devices

- Flashing red lights warn of an approaching train and must be treated like a stop sign. If there are no gates, drivers are required to stop and may proceed only when it is safe to do so. Remember, trains always have the right-of-way.

- Some roads will have lights and a crossbuck above the road on a cantilever.

- Flashing red lights with gates are used to temporarily close the road when a train is approaching. You can proceed to cross only when the gates are up completely and the lights have stopped flashing.

- Nearly half of all collisions occur at crossings equipped with active warning devices. These are warning devices, not protective devices. They are important aids for warning us of dangers, but they can't eliminate collisions.

**Additional Talking Points**

If red lights begin to flash after starting over the tracks, KEEP GOING! Lights should begin flashing at least 20 seconds before the train arrives at the crossing.

School Bus – Some school districts may have specific instructions for drivers on what they should do when red lights are flashing and there is no train approaching.
Visual 21 – Second Train

- Check for a multiple track sign located on the crossbuck.
- If there is more than one track, don’t start across immediately after the end of a passing train. Wait. Make sure another train is not coming from the other direction on another track.
- At a railroad crossing with flashing lights and lowered gates, always wait until the lights stop flashing and the gates are up completely before proceeding.
- At a railroad crossing that has only a crossbuck, wait long enough after the train passes to get a clear view in each direction before proceeding.

Talking Points for Grades 3 - 5

- When you come to a railroad crossing with more than one set of tracks, look for a sign on the crossbuck that tells you how many tracks there are at that crossing.
- If you are waiting for a train to pass by at a crossing with flashing lights and lowered gates, ALWAYS wait until the lights stop flashing and the gates are up completely before proceeding.
- At a railroad crossing that has only a crossbuck sign with no lights or gates, wait long enough after the train passes to see down the tracks a LONG way before crossing. Another train could be coming on the other track – in either direction.
Some collisions occur when motorists run into the side of the train. They are often driving too fast for road conditions and not prepared to stop. Overdriving your headlights means you are driving too fast to stop in the distance illuminated by the headlights.

If drivers would notice and observe the Advance Warning Sign, the round yellow sign, they should slow down and be prepared to stop.

Avoid driving when you are tired, drinking alcohol, or taking medications – prescription or over the counter. They can blur your vision or cause drowsiness and impair reaction time.

Remember – Always Expect A Train!

**Presenter Notes:**

Driver Education – Emphasize the concept of overdriving your headlights to new drivers.
Distractions

Visual 23 – Distractions

- In our modern society people try to multi-task, however when multi-tasking behind the wheel or when around train tracks it can become dangerous and even deadly.

- When you are crossing railroad tracks, keep your full attention on your driving and your surroundings.

- Waiting to make that call, putting on make-up or changing the selection on your MP3 player could make all the difference in your world, literally.
The greatest fear for most locomotive engineers is hitting a school bus full of children. Their next greatest fear is colliding with a truck carrying hazardous materials.

Federal regulations require that trucks carrying hazardous material must stop at all railroad tracks. The drivers must ensure that a train is not approaching and they have sufficient time and space to make it across the tracks safely.

A collision between a train and a truck carrying hazardous materials can be devastating for the people involved and possibly the community.
Visual 43 – Hump Crossing

- Due to close clearance to the road and the design of some crossings, trucks are prohibited from using such crossings as they can easily get hung up and stuck blocking the tracks.

- As you can see in this picture, this truck ignored the warning sign of a hump crossing. When you see this warning sign, find another way across the tracks or find a separated grade crossing. However, some crossings may not have this sign, so you need to be aware of the roadway at all times.