

# The SAFE use of Unattended Railway Level Crossings

## Foreword

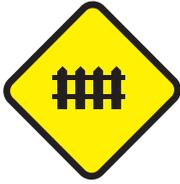
An Unattended Railway Level Crossing is one where the user opens and shuts the gates. These level crossings are also commonly known as Accommodation Level Crossings. Some of them are located on public roads. Clauses 20.2 and 20.6 of this booklet give more detailed definitions.

This booklet does not necessarily cover every situation that may arise in the course of using a level crossing.

It is the responsibility of the user to ensure that it is safe to cross and that the railway and other users of the railway are not endangered.

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This Booklet is issued by **Iarnród Éireann/Irish Rail**  
**Connolly Station**  
**Dublin 1**



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# 1

## Knowing the dangers



- 1.1 Trains travel fast and cannot stop suddenly. A fast train may take between 1/2 mile and one mile to stop.
- 1.2 Shut and fasten all gates at all times. Leaving gates open can result in children or animals wandering on to the line and may encourage unsuspecting drivers of vehicles to go straight on to the level crossing before checking that it is safe to do so. Unfamiliar crossing users or visiting public are more at risk when using Unattended Railway Level Crossings, this is why members of the public are no allowed to use field to field type crossing
- 1.3 Trains can be very silent and this is particularly the case on modern continuously welded rails. Be very careful in windy weather as wind can mask the noise of approaching trains. Deafness, the use of headphones with personal stereos and the use of car radios will affect your ability to hear approaching trains. Remember the wearing of ear protectors will also affect your ability to hear trains. Mobile phones must not be used during the process of working the crossing.

- 1.4 Be aware that weather conditions such as mist, fog, or snow, as well as vegetation growth may affect the warning you receive of approaching trains.
- 1.5 Animals can behave in an unpredictable fashion. See section 11 of this booklet.
- 1.6 Collisions between trains and animals, including cattle, have resulted in derailments.
- 1.7 Crossing the line with slow, heavy, low-slung or cumbersome vehicles, vehicles conveying dangerous substances and with herds of animals needs special protection. See sections 11, 15 and 16 of this booklet.
- 1.8 Level crossing features, such as gates, surfaces, and gradients should be suitable for the vehicles or animals being taken across the line. If in doubt, contact Iarnród Éireann in advance. Use one of the telephone numbers given at the end of this booklet.
- 1.9 Always be very careful during the hours of darkness as confusion may arise between the lights of approaching cars and trains.
- 1.10 Every time you cross the railway remember the Stop, Look, Listen rule.



# 2

## Knowing your crossing

- 2.1 Note the crossing number 'line and location of your crossing. (See section 22)
- 2.2 Be aware of any dangers that the crossing may hold for you. See also section 21 of this booklet.
- 2.3 Once the gates are safely opened, do not enter the crossing if there is anything on the far side of it that may impede your safe passage across the railway, causing you to stop on the crossing, in the path of a train. Make sure that you do not have to stop until you are well clear of the railway.
- 2.4 Warn other users about the crossing and advise them to take care. This includes family members, those delivering goods, service people, doctors, employees, agricultural contractors, tenants and any others who may call to your home or farm.



- 2.5 Offer others a free copy of this booklet. Further supplies can be obtained on request from Iarnród Éireann. Ring the Infrastructure Manager, see section 22 for telephone number. Also this booklet can be downloaded from Iarnród Éireann website [www.irishrail.ie](http://www.irishrail.ie)



# 3

## Knowing the railway

- 3.1 As stated previously, trains cannot stop quickly. A train travelling at 100 mph will cover 1/4 mile in 9 seconds and a train going at 60 mph will cover the same distance in 15 seconds.
- 3.2 A train overhangs the rails by a considerable amount. **Never** assume that a train is only as wide as the space between the rails.
- 3.3 Do not rely on any railway signals, provided for the control of trains, to give you a guarantee that there is no train approaching.
- 3.4 Remember unattended accommodation level crossings\* **are not** protected by signals. A train driver has no knowledge of your presence on the crossing.
- 3.5 Do not make assumptions because you are familiar with the train schedules. Trains can be delayed or indeed can be early, and additional train movements may take place.

\*See section 20.2 and section 20.6



# 4

## The running of trains

- 4.1 Apart from scheduled trains, additional trains are often run. This can be a daily occurrence.
- 4.2 The majority of passenger and freight trains operate according to a fixed schedule.
- 4.3 For various reasons, trains may arrive early or be delayed or have their schedules altered.
- 4.4 Never assume that because a train has just passed the crossing there will not be another one for some time. In certain circumstances trains can follow one another in quick succession. On double lines of railway a second train can arrive immediately after after the first one has passed, going in the same or the opposite direction.
- 4.5 On double lines of railway there will be occasions when trains operate on a particular line in the opposite direction to normal. A train may come on either line and in either direction.
- 4.6 Iarnród Éireann's significant investment in new rolling stock has led to the introduction of new services on many lines. In addition to this the frequency of trains will increase on some lines.

- 4.7 When the engineers are working on the line, it is possible for train movements to take place one after the other in quick succession.
- 4.8 In certain circumstances a train may be moving backwards. Do not take for granted that seeing the rear end of the train means that it is going away from the crossing. When operating in 'push - pull' mode, locomotives push trains. So be careful to remember that a train may be travelling towards you at a level crossing, even though you see no locomotive at the head of the train.
- 4.9 Vigilance is also required on lines where train movements are not frequent



# 5

## The speed of trains

- 5.1 Each railway line has its own maximum permitted train speed. This is reviewed periodically. As track relaying and other railway improvements take place train speeds may be increased.
- 5.2 The permitted train speed may be reduced for a period of time for maintenance reasons. When work has been completed the permitted speed will be increased again.
- 5.3 The actual speed of a train will depend on a number of factors such as the type of train and the location along the line.
- 5.4 Always use the level crossing in such a manner that takes account of the **fastest** train.
- 5.5 If in doubt, contact the Infrastructure Managers (see section 22) for information on the current maximum speed of trains at the crossing.
- 5.6 Remember that even at slow speed a train cannot stop quickly.



# 6

## Viewing distances to trains

- 6.1 A train travelling at 100 mph will cover 1/4 mile in 9 seconds and a train going at 60 mph will cover the same distance in 15 seconds.
- 6.2 Iarnród Éireann endeavours to maintain maximum sighting distances by trimming banks and cutting grass, bushes and trees. Please ring Iarnród Éireann if views are being obscured. See section 22.6 for the Infrastructure Manager's location and telephone number. Always quote the crossing number.
- 6.3 In some locations, bridges, buildings and embankments may restrict the available views of trains. In these cases a whistle board is erected to warn train drivers to sound the hooter, when approaching.
- 6.4 If you see a train approaching or hear the hooter sounding do not use the crossing. Clear the line immediately of any movement under way.



# 7

## Using the crossing and securing the gates



- 7.1 It is the responsibility of the user to ensure that it is safe to cross and that the railway and other users of the railway are not endangered.
- 7.2 Stop clear of the railway line where you get a good view along the track in both distances. Look for the approach of trains, especially in poor visibility or at night. Watch out for the light on an approaching train. Listen for horns or the sound of an approaching train.

When using the level crossing, open both gates before attempting to bring a vehicle or herd of animals across the railway line. Open the opposite gate first.

- 7.3 Before attempting to cross, always examine the railway from the best vantage point to check for approaching trains. If the location of your crossing is such that a good view is not available, you should provide yourself with the necessary assistance to enable the maximum view to be obtained. Shut and fasten the gates immediately after using the crossing.

## 7: Using the crossing and securing the gates

- 7.4 The crossing of members of the public at field to field crossings is not allowed as it is not a normal agricultural activity.
- 7.5 In the case of field crossings make sure that the crossing gates are shut with their bolts home in the slapping posts and that they are padlocked when not in use.
- 7.6 With occupation level crossings (see section 20.6), whilst the padlocking of gates may not be practical due to the number of authorised users, there must be strict compliance with the rule regarding the shutting and fastening of gates after use.



# 7

## Using the crossing and securing the gates



- 7.7 Never lend the padlock key for the crossing gates nor permit the crossing to be used by another party on your behalf unless you are absolutely satisfied that these instructions have been fully read and understood and that such a person is fully aware of the responsibilities involved.
- 7.8 Whenever possible, do not use the level crossing during the inclement weather which may restrict your mobility or may affect your ability to see an approaching train. Such conditions include snow, fog, floods and the like. If you must cross, take extra care.
- 7.9 Should a vehicle suffer a breakdown or become grounded on the crossing, make sure that everybody gets out and gets clear of the line, then telephone or otherwise warn Iarnród Éireann of the danger immediately by the best available means.

## 7: Using the crossing and securing the gates



# 8

## Level crossing condition

- 8.1 Contact Iarnród Éireann should repairs be required to the level crossing gates, fences, surfaces, cattle grids, signs and telephones where provided, or if the views of trains are being obstructed by vegetation. 'See section 22 for the Infrastructure Managers location and telephone number.
- 8.2 You must not use the level crossing for a purpose for which it is not designed.
- 8.3 Make sure that the gradient up to the railway line is not too severe. Severe changes in gradient can cause grounding of vehicles.



- 8.4 Make sure that the level crossing is wide enough for use. In certain circumstances, Iarnród Éireann will enter into an agreement with a landowner for the widening of a crossing.
- 8.5 Under **no circumstances** attempt to alter the level crossing without written permission from Iarnród Éireann.



# 9

## Making contact with Iarnród Éireann / Irish Rail



- 9.1 You may wish to contact Iarnród Éireann by telephone to obtain train information, to seek permission to cross, or to warn about a danger that has arisen at a level crossing. This section deals with communications.
- 9.2 If the level crossing has been provided with a telephone in a yellow box **always** use it before herding animals or when driving a vehicle across the railway.
- 9.3 If there is no yellow telephone provided then you may contact Iarnród Éireann by ringing the controlling signalman. The controlling signalman telephone number is supplied at the level crossing.
- 9.4 If you are unable to get a reply on telephoning the signalman, you must exercise care when crossing. If your movement requires permission, you must not attempt to cross the line until you have contacted the signalman and obtained the required permission.
- 9.5 It is the responsibility of the user to ensure that it is safe to cross and that the railway and other users of the railway are not endangered.



- 9.6 If you ring up Iarnród Éireann remember you will be given information about train times so that you can make an informed judgement as to when it is safest for you to cross the railway. Remember the official to whom you speak will be remote from your level crossing and will have less information than you have as to the particular circumstances at the crossing at the time you wish to cross, such as weather conditions, visibility, surface condition of level crossing, the size of herds or size of vehicle. Therefore you must use all the available information in deciding to cross at the appropriate time.
- 9.7 In the case of slow, heavy, low-slung or cumbersome vehicles you **must obtain permission** from the controlling signalman to cross the line in advance and in good time. You should advise the type of vehicle you intend bringing across and you should also advise the likely duration of your movement as special arrangements will have to be made for the safe use of the level crossing.



# 9

## Making contact with Iarnród Éireann / Irish Rail

- 9.8 The movement of herds of bullocks and other very unpredictable animals (more than two) must be put into the same category as slow, heavy, low-slung and cumbersome vehicles in clause 9.7. This means that such movements should be **preplanned** and **permission** to cross the line must be obtained from the controlling signalman in advance and in good time.
- 9.9 The crossing of the railway with vehicles carrying dangerous substances also requires **permission** to cross and the movement must be preplanned (see also clause 16.3).
- 9.10 Always observe the “ring back” rule if you have contacted Iarnród Éireann by telephone. If you fail to do this the signalman may have to delay following trains.
- 9.11 Always remember to ring up asking for protection when making silage, making hay or during harvesting. See section 17.

- 9.12 Always give the level crossing number (this can be found at the level crossing) when you telephone Iarnród Éireann. You should also give your name and the reason for the phone call.
- 9.13 If you are letting out your land, inform Iarnród Éireann immediately of the name, address and telephone number of your tenant and the date that the letting commences.

This obligation applies also to renewals of lettings and/or to changes in the identity of tenants due to succession or otherwise.

**In addition,** furnish the tenant with a copy of this booklet and make compliance with its contents, and with the contents of the Notices adjacent to accommodation crossings on the land being let, a term of the letting.

- 9.14 If you are selling your land or are transferring it to a member of your family, inform Iarnród Éireann of the name and address of the Purchaser/Transferee and the date of sale or transfer.

# 10

## Pedestrians and cyclists crossing the railway



### Pedestrians and cyclists crossing the railway

- 10.1 When approaching the railway, pedestrians and cyclists should always remember the **stop, look** and **listen** rule.
- 10.2 Pedestrians and cyclists on seeing an approaching train should wait and never run or cycle across the line in front of the train.
- 10.3 When standing clear of the railway line keep at least 2 metres (six feet) from the nearest rail.
- 10.4 Take care not to push a pram too close to the line when looking out for trains or while waiting for trains to pass.
- 10.5 Children of primary school age, especially with bicycles, should **never** be allowed to cross the railway alone.
- 10.6 Cyclists must dismount and walk across the line even if the gates are open.

## 10: Pedestrians and cyclists crossing the railway

- 10.7 Should a bicycle wheel or the like become jammed on the crossing in the track, and should a train approach, then the bicycle should be abandoned and the person involved should move to a place of safety, clear of the railway line.
- 10.8 Dogs must be kept on a lead when using a crossing.
- 10.9 Should the level crossing gates be found to have been left open by a previous user then they must be shut and fastened immediately.
- 10.10 Pedestrians and cyclists should be alert to notice any problem with a level crossing and should telephone details of such to Iarnród Éireann. See section 22 for the Infrastructure Managers location and telephone number.



# 11

## How to herd animals safely across the railway



11.1 The movement of a herd of cattle (i.e. more than two animals) should be carefully planned. Information on train times may be obtained from the controlling signalman (telephone number at crossing).

In the case of bullocks and other very unpredictable animals the movement must be **preplanned** and **permission** to cross the line must be obtained from the controlling signalman, in advance and in good time.

11.2 The movement of other animals, including horses and hunt and hounds, must follow the same requirements, laid down in paragraph one of clause 11.1.

11.3 Remember animals of different types and breeds behave in differing ways. Different animals will require varied handling procedures such as the use of holding pens adjacent to the crossing.

- 11.4 At least two people, **not less than sixteen years of age**, must be in charge when animals which are easily controlled, are being driven across the line. This includes dairy cattle, pigs, sheep and other animals. Such people are necessary to keep a look-out for trains, and to assist the safe passage of such animals, singly or in herds or in flocks, over the crossing.
- 11.5 Where permitted, dairy cattle may be "drifted" across the railway in single file. When making a movement with dairy cattle, you should be ready to cut off the line of animals the moment you see a train approaching. This is done by closing the gate through which access to the railway was gained.
- 11.6 Bullocks and other animals of a nervous disposition need special handling. At least three people, **not less than 16 years of age**, must be in charge, except where the crossing is provided with fencing/holding pens and cattle grids which cut off access along the railway track, when two people must control the movement. Such movements should be **preplanned** with prior communication with Iarnród Éireann regarding the proposed movement across the level crossing. See clause 11.1 and section 22 at the end of this booklet for telephone numbers.

# 11

## How to herd animals safely across the railway



- 11.7 Never attempt to start a movement of animals across the line unless you know that you can complete it or curtail it safely and in time. Information on train movements, and permission in advance, as required, may be obtained from the controlling signalman, see telephone number at crossings.
- 11.8 If an animal or animals stray or escape on to the railway either through a gap in a fence or by means of an open gate always advise the signalman immediately. See telephone number at crossing.

## 11: How to herd animals safely across the railway



# 12

## Driving cars and light vehicles (vans), including trailers, across the railway



- 12.1 Make sure that your vehicle, including tow bar and trailer, is in good mechanical condition and unlikely to stall on the crossing.
- 12.2 Make sure that the handbrake is in good working order.
- 12.3 Make sure that the vehicle is not fogged up inside and that all the windows are clear of snow, ice and dirt and that nothing is blocking your view.
- 12.4 **Open** at least one window before crossing the railway.



- 12.5 **Turn off** all radios, stereos and the like and remove personal stereo headphones. Noise may mask the sound of an approaching train. Mobile phones must not be used during the process of working the crossing.
- 12.6 Be aware of any dangers that the crossing may hold for you. See also section 21 of this booklet.
- 12.7 Stop clear of the railway line where you get a good view along the track in both directions. Look for the approach of trains, especially in poor visibility or at night. Watch out for the light on an approaching train. When using the level crossing, open both gates before attempting to bring a vehicle across the railway line. Open the opposite gate first.
- 12.8 Use the black and yellow marker posts, where provided, when stopping. If there are no such markers then stop at least 2 metres (6 feet) clear of the nearest rail. See also section 19.

# 12

## Driving cars and light vehicles (vans), including trailers, across the railway



- 12.9 You may obtain information on train movements by telephoning the controlling signalman (see telephone number at crossing) or by using the yellow telephone, where provided, to ensure safe passage across the railway line. Always ring a second time to notify Iarnród Éireann that the crossing is now clear.
- 12.10 Should a vehicle suffer a breakdown or become grounded on the level crossing, make sure that everybody gets out and gets clear of the railway line, then telephone or otherwise warn Iarnród Éireann of the danger **immediately** by the best possible means.
- 12.11 Having used the level crossing, make certain that both gates have been shut and fastened.



## 12: Driving cars and light vehicles across the railway



# 13

## Driving tractors across the railway



- 13.1 Make sure that the tractor, including trailer, is in good mechanical condition and unlikely to stall on the crossing.
- 13.2 Make sure that the handbrake is in good working order.
- 13.3 Make sure that the cab windows are not fogged up inside and that all windows are clear of snow, ice and dirt and that nothing is blocking your view.
- 13.4 **Open** at least one window before crossing.
- 13.5 **Turn off** all radios, stereos and the like and remove personal stereo headphones. Noise may mask the sound of an approaching train. Mobile phones must not be used during the process of working the crossing.
- 13.6 Remember the wearing of ear protectors will reduce your ability to hear trains. Protectors should be removed when driving across the line.
- 13.7 Ensure that no tow-hitch or other attachment will foul the railway line as you traverse the level crossing.
- 13.8 Be aware of any dangers that the level crossing may hold for you. See also section 21 of this booklet.

13.9 Stop clear of the railway line where you get a good view along the track in both directions. Look for the approach of trains, especially in poor visibility or at night. Watch out for the light on an approaching train. Listen for horns or the sound of an approaching train. When using the level crossing, open both gates before attempting to bring a vehicle across the railway line. Open the opposite gate first.



# 13

## Driving tractors across the railway



- 13.10 Use the black and yellow marker posts, where provided, when stopping. Make sure that equipment, such as buckets, grabs, forks and the like, attached to the front of the tractor does not protrude beyond the marked posts. If there are no black and yellow markers posts then stop in such a manner that **no part of the tractor or its load** is closer than 2 metres (6 feet) to the nearest rail. See also section 19.
- 13.11 Great care must be taken when driving a tractor which is carrying a load on its forks. A number of dangers may arise. When going down a slope towards the railway or when travelling over a change in gradient the load could shift and fall off. The load may fall on to the railway line, obstructing it. Under severe conditions the tractor may even turn over if care is not taken. When a tractor is being driven over the railway line with loaded forks it is necessary to have another person in attendance. A helper, **not less than sixteen years of age**, must assist the movement. This person should assist the driver in keeping a look out for trains and should make sure that the load being carried does not obstruct in any way the path of a passing train.

Look out for any unevenness in the crossing surface that could upset the load.

- 13.12 You may obtain information on train movements by telephoning the controlling signalman (see telephone number at crossing) or by using the telephone in a yellow box, where provided, to ensure safe passage across the railway line. Always ring a second time to notify Iarnród Éireann that the crossing is now clear.
- 13.13 Should a tractor suffer a breakdown or become grounded on the level crossing, make sure that everybody gets out and gets clear of the railway line, then telephone or otherwise warn of the danger immediately by the best possible means.
- 13.14 Having used the level crossing, make certain that both gates have been shut and fastened.



# 14

## Driving lorries across the railway



- 14.1 Make sure that the lorry, including trailer, is in good mechanical condition and unlikely to stall on the crossing.
- 14.2 Make sure that the handbrake is in good working order.
- 14.3 Make sure that the cab windows are not fogged up inside and that all the windows are clear of snow, ice and dirt and that nothing is blocking your view.
- 14.4 **Open** at least one window before crossing.
- 14.5 **Turn off** all radios, stereos and the like and remove personal stereo headphones. Noise may mask the sound of an approaching train. Mobile phones must not be used during the process of working the crossing.
- 14.6 Ensure that no tow-hitch or other attachments will foul the railway line as you traverse the level crossing.
- 14.7 Be aware of any dangers that the level crossing may hold for you. See also section 21 of this booklet.

14.8 Stop clear of the railway line where you get a good view along the track in both directions. Look for the approach of trains, especially in poor visibility or at night. Watch out for the light on an approaching train. Listen for horns or the sound of an approaching train. When using the level crossing, open both gates before attempting to bring a vehicle across the railway line. Open the opposite gate first.

14.9 Use the black and yellow marker posts, where provided, when stopping. If there are no such markers then stop at least 2 metres (6 feet) clear of the nearest rail. See also section 19.



# 14

## Driving lorries across the railway



- 14.10 When crossing the railway with a light lorry you may ring the controlling signalman (see telephone number at crossing) to obtain information on train movements. Use the yellow telephone where provided.
- 14.11 Heavy lorries and lorries with trailers must be dealt with as described in section 15, (Driving slow, heavy, low slung and cumbersome vehicles across the railway). This means that permission to cross the line must be obtained from the controlling signalman for such movements across the railway (see telephone number at crossing).
- 14.12 Should a lorry suffer a breakdown or become grounded on the level crossing, make sure that everybody gets out and gets clear of the railway line, then telephone or otherwise warn Iarnród Éireann of the danger immediately by the best possible means.
- 14.13 Having used the level crossing make certain that both gates have been shut and fastened.

## 14: Driving lorries across the railway



# 15

## Driving, slow, heavy, low-slung and cumbersome vehicles across the railway



- 15.1 You must obtain permission to cross the railway line from Iarnród Éireann in advance and in good time (see section 22). You should advise the type of vehicle you intend bringing across the line and you should also advise the likely duration of the movement as special arrangements may have to be made for the safe use of the level crossing. Always advise Iarnród Éireann when the level crossing has been safely traversed.
- 15.2 **Never** attempt to cross the railway with a vehicle which may ground on the railway line. You could cause a **serious accident**. You may also cause delays to train services while the problem is being resolved.
- 15.3 Safe passage with an unladen trailer does not guarantee that all will be well on the return journey, if the vehicle is laden.
- 15.4 Make sure that the level crossing gates are sufficiently wide for the vehicle to pass without becoming jammed and without damaging either the gates or their supports.

## 15: Driving, slow, heavy, vehicles across the railway

- 15.5 Should a vehicle suffer a breakdown or become grounded on the level crossing, make sure that everybody gets out and gets clear of the railway line, then telephone or otherwise warn Iarnród Éireann of the danger **immediately** by the best possible means.
- 15.6 Having used the level crossing make certain that both gates have been shut and fastened.



# 16

## Driving vehicles carrying dangerous substances across the railway



- 16.1 This section should be read in conjunction with sections 12, 13 and 14.
- 16.2 Dangerous substances should be taken to include petrol, diesel oil, liquid gas, bottled gas, toxic chemicals and the like.
- 16.3 You must obtain permission to cross the railway line from Iarnród Éireann in good time (see section 22). You should advise the type of vehicle and load you intend bringing across the railway line. You should also advise the likely duration of your movement as special arrangements will have to be made for the safe use of the level crossing. Always advise Iarnród Éireann when the level crossing has been safely traversed.
- 16.4 Drivers of vehicles carrying dangerous substances across the railway, should be given a copy of this booklet. They should be advised of the presence of an unattended accommodation\* level crossing of the route leading to the delivery point.

\*See clause 20.2 and clause 20.6.

## 16: Driving vehicles carrying dangerous substances

- 16.5 Should a vehicle carrying dangerous substances suffer a breakdown or become grounded on the level crossing, make sure that everybody gets out and gets clear of the railway line, then telephone or otherwise warn Iarnród Éireann of the danger **immediately** by the best possible means. The vehicle driver should wait in the vicinity to provide information to the emergency services if necessary.
- 16.6 Having used the level crossing make certain that both gates have been shut and fastened.



# 17

## Special farm activities, such as silage making, hay making and harvesting, necessitating repeated movements across the railway

- 17.1 If you intend undertaking an activity, such as silage making, involving repeated movements of vehicles across the railway, then you should make prior arrangements with Iarnród Éireann to have special **protection** provided. Give at least 48 hours notice (see section 22).
- 17.2 No such movements may take place across the railway until the special protection, which could involve the provision of an Iarnród Éireann flagman, is in place. All instructions given by the flagman must be fully obeyed at all times in relation to the crossing of the line.
- 17.3 If you employ outside contractors to carry out work of any kind then the above arrangements must apply, and it is your responsibility to see that the contractor is fully aware of the safety requirements at the crossing. Supply the contractor with a copy of this booklet. The crossing of members of the public at field to field crossings is not allowed as it is not a normal agricultural active.

- 17.4 Where the current widening agreement has been entered into, Iarnród Éireann will pay 50% of the flagman cost.



# 18

## Level crossing signs and notices



- 18.1 Read all the Iarnród Éireann signs and notices displayed at the level crossing. Satisfy yourself that you understand them.
- 18.2 Obey all of the instructions given by the signs and notices.
- 18.3 Each level crossing is given a unique number. Make sure that you know and use this number when ringing up Iarnród Éireann. You should also use the level crossing number when writing to Iarnród Éireann.
- 18.4 If you should notice that a sign has been damaged or that one is missing from the level crossing then advise Iarnród Éireann. By so doing you may help to prevent an accident.
- 18.5 See the following pages for details of a selection of typical signs found at unattended accommodation level crossings.



“No Trespass”  
sign displayed at level crossings



Number plate giving  
unique number of level  
crossing displayed at  
level crossings



Sign displayed at  
gates of all level  
crossings, warning  
that gates must be  
kept shut and giving  
instructions about  
the safe use of the  
crossings

# 18

## Level crossing signs and notices



Warning sign for Pedestrians



Sign reminding users to shut the level crossings gates



Sign displayed at level crossings, warning of dangers involved in crossings.



“Puffing Billy” Sign displayed at or near level crossings



Sign reminding users to shut the level crossings gates

A large rectangular sign with a black border, divided into several sections. At the top left is a small triangular warning sign of a steam locomotive. To its right is a red rectangular box with the word "DANGER" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. Below the locomotive sign is a yellow diamond-shaped sign with a black border and three black hash symbols (#). To its right is a yellow rectangular box with the text "Unattended Railway Crossing" in black, bold, sans-serif font. Below the diamond sign is a yellow triangular warning sign with a black border and a black exclamation mark. To its right is a yellow rectangular box with the text "Stop, Look Both Ways, Listen, Cross Safely, Shut the Gates" in black, bold, sans-serif font. Below the triangular sign is a blue circular sign with a white border and a white exclamation mark. To its right is a blue rectangular box with the text "YOU Must Shut The Gates Save Lives" in white, bold, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the sign is a black rectangular box with the text "Face Penalty: Prosecution (up to €600) If in doubt phone the Signalman on Lo-Call 1890 XX XX XX" in white, bold, sans-serif font.

Sign displayed at level crossings, warning of dangers involved in crossings.

# 19

## Black and yellow marker posts



- 19.1 Black and yellow marker posts are being introduced at certain level crossings. These are to indicate a safe point at which to stop clear of the railway line, while checking the view along the track.
- 19.2 The markers are positioned at 2 metres (6 feet) from the nearest rail and on each approach to the railway line.
- 19.3 There is a requirement that every time a vehicle or machine is being driven across the level crossing, after opening both gates, **it must be stopped** before any part of it passes the markers. The vehicle driver, having stopped and made certain that it is safe to cross the railway line, may then move off and proceed to cross the railway.
- 19.4 It is vital to stop well clear of the railway line whether or not black and yellow markers have been erected.
- 19.5 By stopping 2 metres (6 feet) clear of the line the vehicle will be clear of any passing train. You must always stop at the markers, with your entire vehicle, including attachments, behind them.

- 19.6 Remember if black and yellow markers are not provided at the crossing, then you must ensure that no part of your vehicle or machine, including attachments and load, stops closer than 2 metres (6 feet) to the line.
- 19.7 On traversing the line, do not stop until every part of your vehicle or machine, including attachments and load, is fully beyond the marker on the other side of the crossing or is at least 2 metres (six feet) clear of the railway.
- 19.8 Having used the crossing make certain that both gates have been shut and fastened.



# 20

## The legal position regarding unattended accommodation level crossings



- 20.1 It is the responsibility of the user to ensure it is safe to cross and that the railway and other users of the railway are not endangered.
- 20.2 An unattended accommodation level crossing, or the type commonly known as a field crossing, is provided solely for the use of a landowner to enable movements to be made from one side of the railway to the other for the purposes of normal agricultural activity.
- 20.3 Under certain circumstances, Iarnród Éireann will enter into a legal agreement with a landowner, enabling the crossing to be widened. One of the conditions of such an agreement is that the crossing gates must be padlocked after use.
- 20.4 Additional traffic across the level crossing, arising from the development of any new business or activity on a landowner's, or adjoining property, is not permitted.

- 20.5 Iarnród Éireann has the legal right to close a level crossing when the land on each side of the railway is no longer in the same ownership.
- 20.6 An accommodation level crossing, or the type commonly known as an occupation crossing, is provided to give access to one or more private dwellings or farms.
- 20.7 No increased use of the crossing can be permitted due to the building of any new dwelling house or houses on the side of the railway remote from a public road.
- 20.8 There is a legal requirement for users to close all level crossing gates after use.
- 20.9 Always remembers that you are liable to a fine in excess of €1000 for failing to shut the level crossing gates.



# 21

## Level Crossing Hazard Checklist



- 21.1 As a level crossing user, you should make yourself aware of particular hazards the crossing may hold for you.
- 21.2 The following list of questions will help you to recognise potential hazards which may be associated with the level crossing you use:
- Are gates left open a problem at the level crossing?
  - Do you use the level crossing during bad weather such as fog and falling snow, or during the hours of darkness?
  - Do children use the level crossing?
  - Do you know where you must stop when checking for approaching trains?
  - Do buildings, bridges, vegetation or other features in the vicinity of the level crossing, block your view of approaching trains?
  - Does noise at the level crossing mask the sound of approaching trains?

- Does anything distract your attention while you are using the level crossing?
- Can anything in the vicinity frighten animals while they are crossing?
- Do you see the level crossing for any purpose other than that for which it was designed?
- If you are an infrequent user of the level crossing, are you aware of the dangers involved?
- Do tailbacks occur on the level crossing?
- Could steep gradients cause your vehicle to ground on the level crossing?

**This list is by no means exhaustive. There may be other hazards that apply to the level crossing you use.**

- 21.3 You should take time to identify those hazards which apply to you and be aware of them each time you use the level crossing.
- 21.4 It is very important to carefully follow the instructions in this booklet every time you use the level crossing.

### 22.1 **Emergency**

In case of any emergency telephone the controlling signalman using the telephone number supplied at the level crossing.

### 22.2 **Permission to cross, where required**

For permission where required to cross the railway, call the controlling signalman using the telephone number supplied at the level crossings.

### 22.3 **Contacting IÉ**

For additional copies of this booklet see [www.irishrail.ie](http://www.irishrail.ie) or contact your local Infrastructure Manager, enquires regarding the level crossing you use or reporting of damaged to level crossing infrastructure contact the relevant Infrastructure Manager in your area:

- Infrastructure Manager Athlone (covers the west of the country) 090 6487711
- Infrastructure Manager Dublin (covers the North & East of the country) 01 7033651
- Infrastructure Manager Limerick Junction (covers the South & South West of the Country) 062 51083