How to talk to your kids about rail safety in three easy steps

Every five days a child is killed in a train collision, yet fewer than half of parents say they have talked with their children about how to be safe around railroads.

In many communities, areas near train tracks are considered by young people to be a popular place to "hang out." Many people, including kids and adults, walk along the tracks, cut across them as a short cut, and pose for group photos and "selfies" without ever knowing risks.

If you live near tracks and/or cross them regularly, having a conversation with your kids, and particularly your teens, could save a life.

Here are three easy steps that can make that conversation easier:

1) **Get the facts.** Did you know that teens, ages 15-19, are at greatest risk of a rail-related injury? Or that trains can overhang tracks by at least three feet? Visit our "Rail Safety Station" for lots of interesting facts, stories, and other resources that can help when you talk to your kids.

2) **Choose the right time for a conversation.** While talking to teens can be challenging, parents who have had conversations about rail safety with their teens told us it's not as difficult as you think compared to other topics. Most parents recommended casually striking up a conversation the next time you and your kids are waiting to cross the tracks. Even simply saying, "I just heard that walking near or on tracks is considered trespassing and is against the law" or "I had no idea that once a train starts to brake, it can take a mile or more for the train to stop" can spark a conversation.

3) **Set a good example.** Half of the parents we surveyed admitted to taking risks themselves around railroads, such as walking along train tracks and driving around gates. Remember, your kids are watching and absorbing everything they see so if you're safe, your kids will be too.

If you haven't had a chat with your kids about rail safety, please do. Let's all work together to make sure that all kids are safe on and near the tracks.