

Rail Safety Guide for Community Leaders

This Rail Safety Guide for Community Leaders is designed to serve as a resource to help Safe Kids coalitions and community partners engage public officials and other community leaders in their rail safety efforts.

This guide contains the following resources for use at the community level:

- Press Release/Statement (template)
- Proclamation for a Rail Safety Observance (template)
- Invitation Letter to Public Official or Community Leader (template)
- Social Media guide

Coalitions and community partners are encouraged to use these resources in conjunction with the Rail Safety Community Profiles available on the [Safe Kids Rail Safety Station](#). Each component can be used individually or together for promoting specific events, like Rail Safety Month and Rail Safety Week. The proclamation statement highlights the importance of rail safety while proposing a Rail Safety Day. The press release provides coverage for a rail safety awareness event as well as a list of tips. The invitation letter offers a public official or community leader the opportunity to attend a rail safety event as well as become a member of a Safe Kids coalition.

This guide and other rail safety resources can be downloaded via the Safe Kids Rail Safety Station at <https://www.safekids.org/RailSafetyStation>.

Rail Community Profiles

Safe Kids Worldwide has developed a new resource that describes injuries occurring on and around railroad tracks at the community-level. Seven communities were chosen for the pilot profiles, which will serve as the basis for future profiles for other select areas. Data are for rail-related injuries reported to the Federal Railroad Administration between 2011 and 2020 and describe the injuries during that time in terms of environmental, circumstantial, and behavioral factors. The pilot profiles for each community can be downloaded below and should be used along with the other resources in this guide.

[Chicago Metropolitan Area, IL](#)

[Greater Sacramento, CA](#)

[Minneapolis–Saint Paul, MN](#)

[Greater San Antonio, TX](#)

[Greater Houston, TX](#)

[Dallas–Fort Worth Metropolitan Area, TX](#)

[San Joaquin County, TX](#)



Template Press Release

[Date]

Contact: [Contact Info]

[Title] [Name] Joins Safe Kids Worldwide and Union Pacific Railroad in National Rail Safety Initiative to Help Prevent Childhood Rail-Related Injuries and Deaths.

[Date] – [City, State] – [Name, Title if applicable] joined with [coalition name] and community safety advocates today at [Location] to raise awareness, educate families, and prevent rail-related injuries and deaths involving children.

Every five days a child is killed in a train collision and rail-related incidents have been recorded every month of the year in nearly all 50 states. Trespass incidents make up 65 percent of these fatalities and 47 percent of the nonfatal injuries, with teens ages 15-19 being the age group most frequently impacted. So far this year there have been [\[get number here\]](#) railway incidents in [State].

“Every four hours a person or vehicle is struck by a train and nearly every one of these tragedies is preventable,” said [name of city official] the City’s [city official’s title]. “There are simple, proven steps parents and communities can do to keep their kids safe and education and public awareness are the first, very important steps. That’s why I’m so excited to join a team of advocates who are dedicated to working together, getting the word out, and eliminating these preventable tragedies in our community and beyond.”

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 knowing the facts about trains:

- Trains are at least three feet wider than the tracks on either side.
- Modern trains are quieter than people might think.
- Once a train starts to brake, it can take a mile or more for the train to completely stop.

[Title] [Last Name] and [others at the event] are encouraging drivers, passengers, and pedestrians in [City] to learn about rail safety, to be cautious around crossings, and to avoid trespassing near train tracks.

In addition, [City of (City) / Safe Kids (Coalition)] is providing the following **Tips on Rail Safety**:

1. **Never Try to Beat a Train:** Trains can take more than a mile to slow to a stop. From the time a train begins to brake, the train will still travel the length of 18 football fields before it can completely stop.
2. **Heads Up, Devices Down:** Avoid distractions like texting, calling, or listening to music on the phone while at railroad crossings. Trains can be deceptively quiet. By the time you see or hear one, it will be too late for it to stop.



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3. **Give Trains Space:** Don't walk alongside tracks, even as a shortcut. Trains are at least three feet wider than the tracks on either side. Not only are these areas dangerous, but they are also private property, making it illegal to be there.
4. **What To Do If a Car Stalls on a Track:** Whether or not a train is coming, drivers and passengers in a motor vehicle stalled on a rail track should immediately exit the vehicle and run away from the tracks.
5. **Keep An Eye Out for Active Warning Devices:** Near train tracks, there will often be road signs, gates, or lights to indicate an approaching train. When these warning devices are active (descending or lowered gates and/or red lights flashing), drivers and pedestrians should stop 15 feet away.

[include boilerplate information]



Template Proclamation

[Date] XXX is Rail Safety Day in [City]

WHEREAS, every 4 hours in the United States, a person or vehicle is struck by a train at a rail crossing; and

WHEREAS, roughly every 5 days a child dies from a train collision, and nearly three children are injured for each fatality; and

WHEREAS, rail incidents are preventable and often resulting in death or severe injuries; and

WHEREAS, approaching trains can require a mile or more to slow their high speeds to a stop, even when applying their emergency brakes; and

WHEREAS, if a [City] citizen sees the flashing red lights, lowered gates, signaling man or a stop sign notifying road users of oncoming trains, they should stop 15 feet away from the rail track; and

WHEREAS, Union Pacific and Safe Kids [coalition name] join with firefighters, first responders, medical professionals, children's hospitals, pediatricians, police officers, and other safety advocates to raise awareness, educate families, and prevent rail-related injuries and deaths involving children.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, [NAME,] [Public Official's Title] of [City] do hereby proclaim [insert DATE] as

RAIL SAFETY DAY

and call upon the residents of [CITY] to join with me in raising awareness about how to keep community members and especially children safe around railroad tracks, and, furthermore, that every day will be dedicated to keeping our citizens, our families, safe from injury.



Sample Invitation Letter to Local Public Official

[Date]

[First Name] [Last Name]

[Title]

[Address]

[City], [State] [ZIP]

Dear [Title] [Last Name]:

We write to invite you to participate in our [name of local program/event]. [Description of program including goals and resources/event including time, date, location]

Trains and railways play an important role in our community, providing transportation for passengers, goods, and [city]'s resources. As we pursue [Rail Safety Program/Event], we invite you, Mayor [Mayor's Last Name], to join us in educating [city]ians on steps to mitigate risks associated with trespassing and railroad crossings.

You may be aware that [get number [here](#)] railway fatalities have occurred in [state] this year, not including other incidents resulting in injuries. [For profile sites use total fatalities from profile for your community instead of state total] Ninety-four percent of rail fatalities occur at railroad crossings or as a result of trespassing. These are preventable tragedies, and we hope you will join us in our work to help [city/community] citizens make safe choices near the tracks.

These tragedies are an issue nationwide, with a person or vehicle being struck by a train every four hours. This issue extends to our children, with a child being fatally injured every five days. There are simple steps drivers and pedestrians can take when approaching or crossing train tracks to help ensure their safety as well as the safety of their children.

Mayors are critical in this effort because you are often the closest elected officials to the people, with broad reach among families and media. We would like to invite you to join [Safe Kids Coalition or other community group] as a member, helping to encourage your constituents to pay close attention not only to rail safety but to safety issues on the road and in their homes.

To join our [event/program] or discuss becoming a member of [Safe Kids Coalition or other community group], you or your staff can contact [Coordinator Name], [Coordinator Email], [Coordinator Phone].










Sincerely,

[Your Signature]



Rail Safety Social Media Guide

Thank you for helping to amplify the importance of safety around trains. Here are suggested posts for Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to help spread the word. You're welcome to develop your own posts or use the following suggested content. The accompanying image files can be found [here](#).

	<p>Railroad Safety Tip: Don't be tempted to walk along the railroad track. It might be a shortcut, but it is dangerous and not worth the risk. It is also against the law to walk on the track and the land around it because it is private property.</p>
	<p>At railroad crossings, do you ignore the gates and signals and make a dash for it? Do you walk along railroad tracks? If you think you'll be able to get out of danger in time, it's time to retrain your brain. Visit www.safekids.org/RailSafetyStation</p>
	<p>Did you know? About every 5 days, a child dies from a train collision. This is a problem that is often overlooked. Visit www.safekids.org/RailSafetyStation</p>
	<p>Learn what you need to know to teach your kids and community about railroad safety. Visit www.safekids.org/RailSafetyStation</p>
	<p>If you are using a cell phone, headphones or playing a game on your mobile device, remember: Heads Up, Devices Down when you cross the train tracks.</p>
	<p>Rail Safety Tip: If lights are flashing or the gate is down at a railroad crossing, wait for the train to pass completely, the gates to lift and the lights to stop flashing before crossing. Learn more at www.safekids.org/RailSafetyStation</p>
	<p>Did you know? Trains are at least three feet wider than the tracks on either side, so even though you clear the tracks, you can still get hit by the train. Learn more at www.safekids.org/RailSafetyStation</p>
	<p>Rail Safety Tip: Only cross train tracks at a designated crossing. Designated crossings are marked by a sign, lights or a gate. Learn more at www.safekids.org/RailSafetyStation</p>
	<p>All the likes in the world won't replace your child. Trains can take up to a mile to stop. Talk to your kids about not hanging out on or near train tracks. Learn more at www.safekids.org/RailSafetyStation</p>

RAIL SAFETY



Did you know that there have been [number] rail-related injuries in [state] since [year]? Learn what you need to know to teach your kids and our community about railroad safety. Visit www.safekids.org/RailSafetyStation



Teaching kids simple rail safety tips like never walking on or near tracks can mean everything to a parent. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s9Ki8Q0hxbE>

Suggested hashtag: #railsafety

