



**REMOVE YOUR HEADPHONES
REMOVE YOUR RISK**



Rail Safety Week is an annual community awareness initiative lead by KiwiRail and TrackSAFE NZ with support from other organisations including NZ Transport Agency, NZ Police, Transdev Auckland, Transdev Wellington, Greater Wellington Regional Council, Auckland Transport, NZ Automobile Association and many local authorities around New Zealand. The event aims to put the spotlight on the importance of rail safety and encourage safe behaviour around tracks and trains.

This year Rail Safety Week runs from 14 to 20 August 2017.

Background

There are around 3,200 level crossings in New Zealand. This includes both public and private level crossings. There is a level crossing approximately every 1.5km on New Zealand's 4,000kms of track. More than 82 people have died as a result of collisions with trains since 2012.

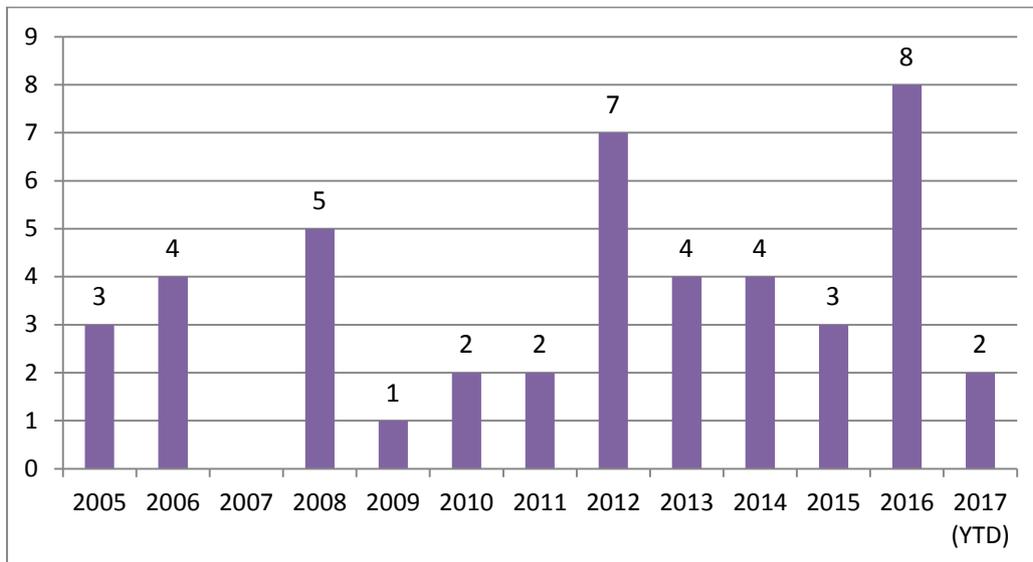
Level crossing collisions make up approximately one percent of all fatal collisions on New Zealand roads. However level crossing collisions are different from road crashes in that:

- A person is 13.2 times more likely to die in a level crossing collision between a train and a vehicle;
- A person is 3.4 times more likely to be seriously injured in a level crossing collision between a train and a vehicle;
- 2.7 times more males than females are involved in level crossing collisions (1.9 times for general road accidents);
- a higher percentage of collisions occur in open road areas: 48% vs 31% for general road accidents; and
- although unlikely, railway collisions have the potential to be catastrophic (in the event of a freight train v passenger bus, or a heavy vehicle v passenger train).

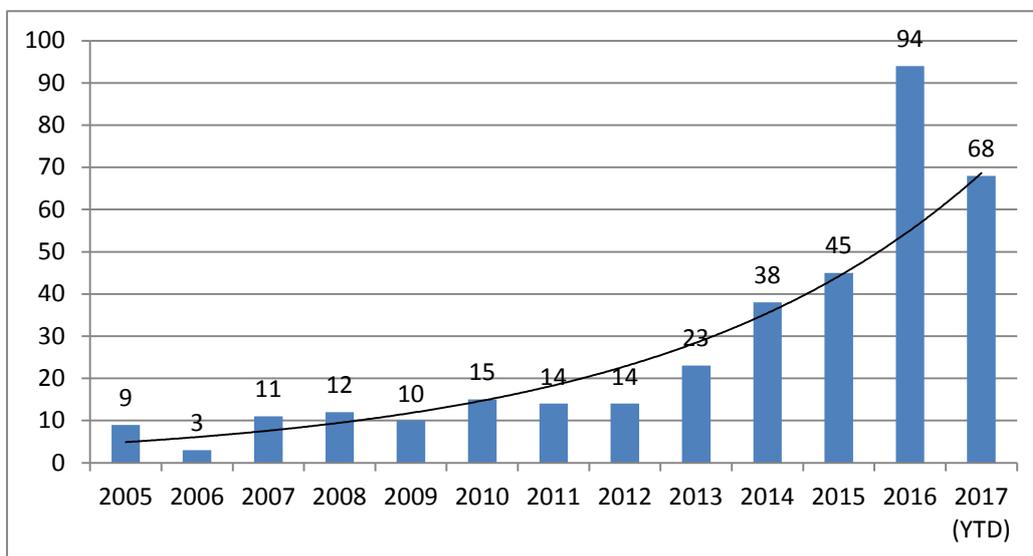
Each year trains in New Zealand make over 30 million passenger trips and carry more than 4.9 billion (net tonne kilometre) of freight. Over the last ten years the number of passenger and freight trains has increased as a result of rising demand and government investment. In urban areas trains are now more frequent and faster, especially on the Auckland double-tracked and electrified network.

The volume of road traffic crossing railway tracks has also increased substantially in some places, particularly in areas that have gone from rural to urban or semi-urban. This increased traffic includes cyclists and pedestrians (including rail passengers going to and from stations).

In the past twenty years there has been a significant improvement in level crossing safety in New Zealand with a combination of infrastructure improvements and increased awareness helping to reduce the number of collisions. Vehicle collisions in particular have declined since 1993. However, collisions with pedestrians at level crossings are increasing.



Collisions with pedestrians at level crossings as at 11 August 2017 (source: KiwiRail)



Near misses with pedestrians at level crossings as at 11 August 2017 (source: KiwiRail)

Increasing risk

A changing environment is contributing to an increasing risk for pedestrians at level crossings.

Emerging issues include:

- An increase in the number of people using personal-technology (smart phones, headphones) which is contributing to pedestrian and motorist distraction around railway tracks. Three deaths at level crossings in the past 18 months reportedly involved the use of headphones.
- The introduction of longer, heavier trucks and increasing truck movements has increased the problem at a number of crossings in New Zealand where 'short stacking' has been identified as an increasing risk concern. Short-stacking is where a heavy vehicle sits on the railway line while waiting to move through an adjacent intersection.
- More subdivisions are occurring around the rail corridor. This has moved some rural level crossings into urban or semi-urban areas. Public safety at level crossings is paramount and needs to be factored into all urban planning around the rail network.

- There has been a rapid increase in the numbers of motorists and pedestrians using both public and private level crossings as the result of population growth in some areas.
- There are more wheelchairs and other accessibility aids that need to access level crossings.
- There has been an increase in the number of cyclists crossing the rail network, particularly in urban areas. The increase in cycling has been driven by the creation of urban cycleways. In some areas these cycleways cross the rail network and the risk this creates needs to be factored into the design.
- Faster and quieter electric trains have been introduced to Auckland and there are increased services and frequency of services in both Auckland and Wellington.
- Freight volumes are projected to increase, with more frequent freight services on some parts of the network. For example the East Coast Main Trunk line (Hamilton to Tauranga) has gone from nine services a day to more than 30.
- There are ongoing challenges in funding engineering upgrades to level crossings. Upgrading a crossing to flashing lights and bells costs around \$120,000 and installing half arm barriers costs around \$200,000. Grade separating a crossing (putting in either an overpass or underpass) can cost \$5 million or more.

Rail Safety Week Focus

This year Rail Safety Week is focussing on two major concerns:

- The safety of pedestrians in urban zones and
- Motorists' safety in rural areas.

The increasing use of technology along with the rollout of electric trains in Auckland and Wellington, and more frequent services particularly in Auckland, means increasing messages to pedestrians about staying alert and focused.

Rural drivers are being encouraged not to be complacent, as complacency is one of the known key contributing factors to collisions. People expect they won't encounter a train because they may only see two a week. Messages are to stay focused every time someone approaches a level crossing, and to always expect trains at any time, from either direction.

“TrackStoppers”

A social media video has been produced to encourage people to cross safely at level crossings. The film was made at the Epuni level crossing in Wellington and involved well-known New Zealand band Drax Project. The band performed by the side of the level crossing as pedestrians approached and stopped playing as they started crossing. The concept promotes the idea that pedestrians should stay alert and focus on their surroundings when using a level crossing by removing their headphones. Cameras captured the band setting up and playing, as well as people's reactions to the band.

KiwiRail has also produced a series of five one minute videos focusing on rail safety and the effects that incidents and near-misses can have on the well-being of the locomotive engineer. These are powerful and personal accounts of the experiences of rail staff. The video content focuses on services on both urban and rural routes. These social media videos will be shared on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and other social media channels during Rail Safety Week.

Campaign materials

A suite of associated campaign material has been produced to complement the “TrackStoppers” social media video. This following digital toolkit has been put together to help other individuals and organisations promote Rail Safety Week.

- national media release;
- A3 digital poster for download;
- A5 digital flyer for distribution;
- web banners for websites;
- radio advertisement;
- ‘TrackStoppers’ social media video;
- social media videos from KiwiRail locomotive engineers;



The “**Expect Trains**” campaign will also continue during Rail Safety Week and will specifically target areas where the safety issues are more related to motorists and vehicles. Campaign collateral will be available to download from the TrackSAFE NZ website.

The “**Expect Trains**” safety campaign is also being delivered in the South Island as trains are due return to the Main North Line (and work trains are already operating). The campaign (organised by NCTIR/NZTA/KiwiRail) involves ongoing print, digital and radio advertising, roadside billboards, school visits and a range of community engagement activities

Events

A number of events are being held throughout New Zealand to mark Rail Safety Week. These include, but are not limited to:

- A stakeholder launch event will be held at the Wellington Railway Station at 10.00am on Monday 14 August. Associate Transport Minister Hon Tim Macindoe will formally launch the week’s events. The event will be attended by a number of dignitaries, level crossing collision survivors, locomotive engineers and representatives from Tawa School. A number of other awareness raising events will be held around Wellington during the week, led by Transdev Wellington with the support of the Tawa Community Board.
- The NZ Transport Agency/KiwiRail “**Expect Trains**” safety campaign will be launched at the Matapuna Road level crossing at Horopito on Wednesday 16 August. This campaign is focused on drawing attention to the safety of motorists at rural level crossings and addressing the issue of complacency.
- A major community event, Steamfest, is being held in Otorohanga involving KiwiRail, the Otorohanga District Council and Mainline Steam. More than 11,000 people are expected to attend, and there will be a “**KiwiRail Rail Safety Week train**” used to communicate safety messages to the community.
- Platform/level crossing awareness events will be held in Auckland at Baldwin Avenue (16 August, 3pm), Glen Innes (17 August, 3pm) and Britomart (Friday 18 August 7am-9am)
- A number of other community awareness-raising events are being held throughout the country, including a launch event in New Plymouth on Tuesday 15 August, activities in Horowhenua and awareness events in Dunedin on Tuesday 15 August.



Key safety messages for pedestrians

- Every time you're near railway tracks, be alert. Trains can come at any time, from either direction.
- Only cross at formed pedestrian crossings or an overpass or underpass.
- Remove your headphones, stop and always look both ways for trains before crossing the tracks.
- Only cross if you are sure there are no trains in sight.
- Obey the warning signs at the crossing – if lights are flashing or bells are ringing it means a train is approaching.
- If a train has passed or is stationary at a station, always check both ways again to make sure another train is not coming. Two tracks might mean there is a second train.

Key safety messages for motorists

- Take extreme care when driving over a railway level crossing.
- Obey the warning signs and look carefully in both directions for trains.
- Listen, be aware and pay careful attention to your surroundings.
- Always ensure there is space on the other side of the crossing for your vehicle.

When approaching a level crossing where lights and bells are operating, or barrier arms are lowered or have started to come down, you must:

- stop your car
- wait for the train to pass
- wait for the lights to stop flashing and the barrier arms to lift before entering the crossing

At level crossings controlled by either 'Give Way' or Stop signs, you must:

- slow down, and be prepared to stop
- look both ways up and down the tracks to check the railway lines are clear
- if there is a 'Stop' sign, you must stop your vehicle completely

Rail Safety Week is led by KiwiRail with the support of the following organisations:

