

# SEPTA Media Relations

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## **Respect the Train When Traveling By Foot and By Car** *SEPTA Reminds Drivers to Be Aware of Train Tracks and Grade Crossings*

**PHILADELPHIA, PA (April 24, 2019)** -- Rail trespassing is one of the top safety issues for transit organizations across the country. “Respect the Train” is the theme for SEPTA’s seventh annual system-wide Safety Day, to be held on May 1.

SEPTA reminds the Greater Philadelphia Region that respecting the train is not just for pedestrians — rail safety is important for motorists driving near tracks, too.

“We’ve seen the images of devastating grade crossing accidents from across the country. On April 8, one of those accidents happened on our Media/Elwyn Line tracks,” said SEPTA General Manager Jeffrey Knueppel. “One life is too many in an accident that could have been even more catastrophic. SEPTA remains committed to educating our communities about rail grade crossing safety in order to reduce collision incidents that result in injury or devastating loss.”

There are precautions motorists should take when driving near train tracks and through grade crossings. The closing gates, warning bells and flashing lights indicate that the train is approaching and has the right of way. Drivers that pass through flashers or crossing gates are in violation of motor vehicle laws and are subject to heavy fines. Road markers indicate the safest distance for vehicles to stop from the grade crossing when the gates are down.

“Never travel into a crossing until the flashing lights go out completely,” said SEPTA Assistant General Manager of System Safety Jim Fox. “There may be a second train coming from the opposite direction that will re-activate the gates. Trains can’t swerve to avoid something in their way or stop on a dime like a rubber-tired vehicle.”

Fox also warns motorists not to drive onto the tracks at a grade crossing unless they have ample space to pull ahead. “The crossing gates could come down with your car on the tracks and no room to drive forward or reverse back.”

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When traveling near train tracks, whether on foot or by motor vehicle, SEPTA reminds the public that trains can come in any direction at any time. “You can never assume that trains don’t run on certain stretches of track. And, just because there is a station next to a crossing, doesn’t mean that a train is going to stop,” said Fox.

If you think you can listen for the sound of a train to know when to clear the tracks, think again. “Today’s trains aren’t loud. Electric vehicles and welded rails mean trains no longer make that clickety-clack noise. You won’t know the train is coming until it’s too late to get out of the way,” said Kneuppel.

SEPTA offers rail safety tips and videos on its website, <http://www.septa.org/safety/respect-the-train.html>. The Authority’s System Safety Department makes Operation Lifesaver rail safety presentations to students from kindergarten through high school and to a wide variety of audiences such as hearing and visually impaired adults, driver’s education students, emergency responders and professional drivers. SEPTA offers the presentations — which are aimed at reducing the number of pedestrian and driver injuries and fatalities around railroad tracks by highlighting risky behaviors — free of charge to school and community groups.

*For more information about SEPTA safety and to download PDFs of safety tips for all SEPTA modes, visit [www.septa.org/safety/tips/](http://www.septa.org/safety/tips/). For information about SEPTA’s Operation Lifesaver presentations, and to schedule a presentation, call 215-580-7800.*

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