

15. Level Crossings

Introduction

A level crossing is where a road crosses a railway or tramway line. There are many different types of crossings, with different barrier, lights and road marking combinations. Here is an explanation of some of the main ones.

Lesson objectives

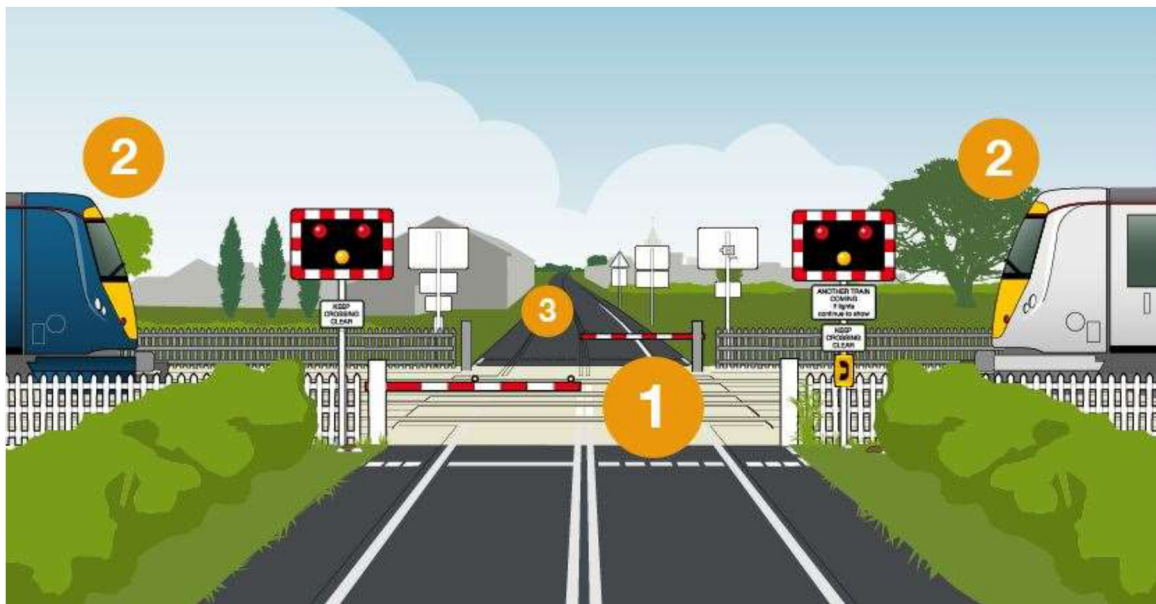
By the end of this lesson you should be able to:

- Be able to deal with approaching and driving over a level crossings safely;
- explain the dangers associated with a level crossing and tramways;
- demonstrate a reasonable level of understanding regarding level crossings.

Lesson brief

In this lesson, you will learn the correct and safe way to deal with various types of level crossing. You will learn all about the signs and road markings and also what you should do in an emergency. There are also some Do's and Don'ts that you will be shown.

The Level Crossing



1. Temptation

It's tempting to jump the lights or race around the barriers. Don't do it – you're putting lives at risk.

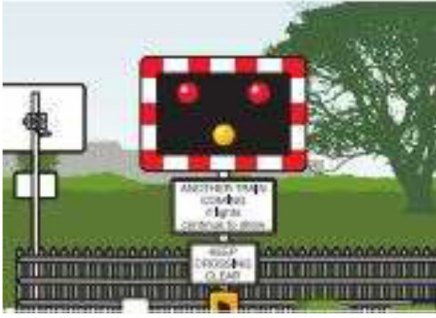
2. Assumption

Don't assume there is only one train or use previous experience to guess when the train is coming. Trains can come from either direction at any time.

3. Blocked Exit

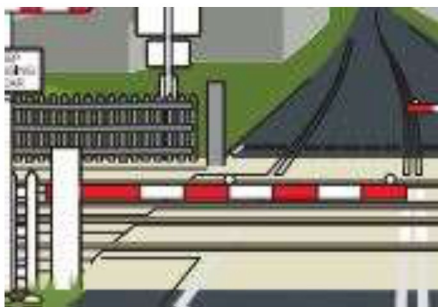
It is surprisingly easy to end up stationary on the tracks – make sure your exit is clear before driving onto the crossing

Warning Lights



- The majority of road crossings have amber and red warning lights.
- We must stop when the amber lights come on, unless our vehicle has already crossed the stop line.
- We must stop when the red lights flash.
- We need to remain stationary until the lights stop flashing – there may be more than one train.
- A few crossings have red and green lights. We must only cross when the green lights are showing.

Barriers



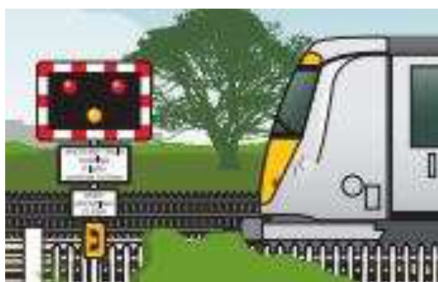
- Some crossings are 'open' and don't have barriers, some have a 'full barrier' which blocks the entire road, whilst others have a 'half barrier.'
- We need to remain stationary until the barriers are fully raised – there may be more than one train.

Road Markings



- Crossings will usually have a white stop line. We must stop before this line if the warning lights come on or the barrier descends.
- Some crossings have yellow box markings to emphasise the need to make sure our exit is clear before driving across.

How long until train actually arrives?



Do's and Don'ts

- As users, we can never be sure! There is no set amount of time from a warning activating to the train arriving and there may be more than one train.

Do

- obey the flashing red stop lights.
- cross, only when the lights go off and barriers open.
- wait if a train goes by and the red lights continue to flash. This means another train will be passing soon. The warbling, high pitched siren, may go a note or two higher
- stop behind the white line that runs across the road.
- keep going if you have already crossed the white line when the amber light comes on.
- give more space for bikes around rail tracks and tramways, they may have to avoid the tracks.
- concentrate – it's easy to get distracted, especially by phones, music and conversation.

Don't

- move onto the crossing after the lights show.
- zig-zag around half-barriers, they lower automatically because a train is approaching.
- start to cross if your exit is not clear. Some level crossings may have yellow box junctions on them, just to emphasize this.
- drive over it nose to tail.
- stop on or just after the crossing.
- park too close to the crossing.
- reverse onto or over a controlled crossing.

Highway Code practical references

Rules: 34, 54, 82, 167, 243, 291-299.