

LIFESAVING TIPS FOR MEDIA

When covering stories near railroad tracks



We know that the public and the media are very interested in the progress of the SMART rail and pathway project. As safety is always our first priority, we would like to provide a reminder that this is an ACTIVE RAILROAD and that entering a railroad right-of-way is trespassing.

If your job takes you near railroad tracks, it is important that your activities are conducted in a safe and legal manner for your reporters, photographers, railroad employees and the public. Please follow these important safety guidelines.

Never stand on or near the tracks while reporting, photographing or videotaping. In addition to being extremely dangerous, it is illegal trespass, subject to citation and fines.

If you are standing on or near tracks, you may not see, hear or feel the vibration of an approaching train.

Never, under any circumstance, should you ask photo or interview subjects to enter the right-of-way or to stand/sit on or near the tracks. Again, this is both dangerous and illegal.

National statistics show that members of the public will mimic the behavior they see in photos and video. People in the community, including children, may decide it's okay to be on the tracks because of your example. This sends the wrong message and risks lives.

Freight service, conducted by freight operator NWP Co. on the shared right-of-way, is active on the tracks right now. The freight service schedule changes from week to week and from day to day – always assume that a train could be operating at any time.

SMART's passenger service is under active construction, with on-track construction equipment and trains operating throughout the railroad corridor.

If you have a story for which you'd like to report or photograph from within the right-of-way, contact SMART Community Outreach. We will work with you to try to accommodate your request at a safe time and location, accompanied by someone with the necessary safety certifications.

SMART Community Education & Outreach
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Rail Safety Facts

- It is both dangerous and illegal to enter the railroad right-of-way without permission of the railroad.
- Trains cannot stop quickly -- a train traveling at 55 mph takes about a mile to stop. By the time a train operator sees you, it is too late to stop the train in time.
- An oncoming train is moving faster and is closer to you than it appears. Similar to an airplane traveling at 150 mph that appears to float onto the runway, it's hard to determine a train's speed and distance from you.
- Trespass is the leading cause of fatalities on railroad tracks, both nationally and in California.
- SMART works with the national non-profit, Operation Lifesaver, to spread the rail safety message and encourage everyone to do their part to build rail safe communities. The media plays an important role in this effort.
- Operation Lifesaver rail safety presentations can be arranged for your editors, reporters and staff. Visit www.caol.us and click on "Request a Presentation".
- Visit www.oli.org for more information on rail safety topics.



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