



# Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office

*Sheriff Jerry L. Clayton*

## Media Release

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### Rail Safety Week News Release – September 8, 2016

The Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office will join other Law Enforcement Agencies across Michigan to reduce preventable rail related incidents as Governor Rick Snyder has proclaimed the week of September 11-17<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Rail Safety Week.

“Our goals for Washtenaw County are to enhance individual and community safety through our educational and enforcement efforts related to existing laws involving the operation of trains and vehicles. Especially violations involving drivers and pedestrians ignoring rail signals and circumventing safety barriers. Additional checks of trespassers walking on and over tracks will be included in this effort” says, Sheriff Jerry Clayton.

In Michigan in 2014 there were 80 crashes with 12 fatalities and 52 crashes in 2015 with 3 killed. In trespasser related incidents there were 5 fatal in 2014 with 3 in 2015. Nationwide there is an incident involving a train and a vehicle or person on average every 3 hours.

#### **Safety Tips for Pedestrians and Drivers:**

- Cross train tracks only at designated pedestrian or roadway crossings, and obey all warning signs and signals.
- Railroad tracks, bridges, yards and equipment are private property and trespassers are subject to arrest and fine.
- Never play or walk on the tracks, or use train tracks as a shortcut – it's dangerous and illegal.
- Stay alert around railroad tracks - no texting, gaming, headphones or other distractions that would prevent you from hearing an approaching train.
- Trains and cars don't mix. Never race a train to the crossing — even if you tie, you lose.
- Be aware that trains cannot stop quickly. Even if the locomotive engineer sees you, a freight train moving at 55 miles per hour can take a mile or more to stop once the emergency brakes are applied. That's 18 football fields!
- Never drive around lowered gates — it's illegal and deadly. If you suspect a signal is malfunctioning, call the 1-800 number posted on or near the crossing signal or your local law enforcement agency (911).



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- Do not get trapped on the tracks; proceed through a highway-rail grade crossing only if you are sure you can completely clear the crossing without stopping. Remember, the train is three feet wider than the tracks on both sides.
- If your vehicle ever stalls on a track with a train coming, get out immediately and move quickly away from the tracks in the direction from which the train is coming. If you run in the same direction the train is traveling, when the train hits your car you could be injured by flying debris. Call your local law enforcement agency for assistance (911).

Please help us reduce the alarming high number of rail related incidents and use extra caution around all rail ways.

For more information contact Derrick Jackson, Director of Community Engagement. Contact Information (734) 973-4503/Cell Phone (734) 891-2243