



PRESS RELEASE N° 08/2022

International Level Crossing Awareness Day (ILCAD), 9 June 2022

Trespass and Suicide Prevention – 1st edition, 8 June 2022

Denver (CO), USA

Paris, 7 June 2022

International Level Crossing Awareness Day (ILCAD) is a worldwide initiative to improve awareness of level crossing safety. Since 2009 the campaign has been spearheaded by UIC, the worldwide railway organisation, with the support of the railway community around the world.

Around 50 countries usually take part in the ILCAD annual campaign.

A partner country hosts the launch event each year, offering an opportunity to share good practices and projects to improve safety and reduce the incident toll.

This conference attracts railway industry representatives, road authorities, academics, and many others from around the world who are working to raise awareness of the dangers surrounding level crossings.

In 2022 the international conference to launch the 14th ILCAD campaign will be hosted by the Association of American Railroads (AAR), the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and Operation Lifesaver, Inc. (OLI) on 9 June in Denver, Colorado (USA), preceded for the first time by a special session on trespass and suicide prevention on 8 June.

UIC estimates that there are half a million level (grade) crossings in the world, with over 100,000 in the EU and over 200,000 in the USA, representing 20% and 40% of the total number of level crossings in the world, respectively. In the EU and the USA, level crossing accidents and fatalities represent almost a third of all railway incidents. When incidents involving pedestrian trespassing on tracks are included, this figure rises to 91% of all railway accidents in the EU and 95% in the USA.

During the Covid-19 pandemic most countries experienced an increase in inappropriate behaviour by pedestrians, cyclists and vulnerable people both at level crossings and on and around railway tracks, resulting in a corresponding increase in near misses. Consequently, the ILCAD host countries decided to focus the messaging this year on vulnerable people with the slogan: "Don't put your life at risk, stay away from tracks!".

All over the world, regardless of the country or culture, the railway sector faces the same problems at level crossings and around tracks. The vast majority of collisions at level crossings are caused by users who deliberately take risks or make bad decisions by mistake, out of habit or when distracted.

Level crossings are high-risk spots on the railway network for both road and railway users. Risk assessments, engineering solutions and innovations are used to upgrade the riskiest level crossings.

In addition to engineering measures, education/awareness-raising actions may be implemented to improve safety at level crossings. When necessary, enforcement measures shall then be undertaken to deter inappropriate behaviour at level crossings and at and around railway tracks.

Krzysztof Mamiński, UIC Chairman said: *"Undertaking initiatives and exchanging experiences in increasing the level of safety at rail-road crossings are at the centre of our activities. The debate on these topics has a global dimension, and a special role is played by the International Level Crossing Awareness Day. This year's edition will have a unique character, as it will mark the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the International Union of Railways. That is why today, I cordially invite you to participate in the events that will take place as part of ILCAD. I am convinced that among the representatives of railway infrastructure managers, specialists and promoters of railway safety, we will jointly develop solutions that will contribute to the improvement of safety in railway areas."*

Karl Alexy, FRA's Associate Administrator for Railroad Safety & Chief Safety Officer, said:

"Highway-rail grade crossing safety and trespass prevention are both intractable problems, the solution to which lies not with a single entity, but with all of us – regulators, railroads, communities, drivers, and pedestrians. Solving this problem will be at or near the top of the long list of great accomplishments of this industry. ILCAD and other meetings like this provide an opportunity to take another step closer to the solution."

Rachel Maleh, Executive Director, Operation Lifesaver, Inc. (OLI), said: *"Operation Lifesaver is proud to be part of the host committee for this year's ILCAD conference in Denver. It's exciting to have the ILCAD conference in the USA during Operation Lifesaver's 50th anniversary year. I am pleased to join safety leaders from around the world in our ongoing efforts to educate drivers and pedestrians about staying safe at crossings and near railroad rights-of-way. Together, we can stop track tragedies."*

Ian Jefferies, President and CEO of the Association of American Railroads said: *"North American freight railroads understand the need to reduce and ultimately eliminate incidents at grade crossings, particularly because so many of these tragedies are preventable. ILCAD is an important part of increasing awareness around grade crossing safety, which AAR and its members proudly support. We are excited for new programs to advance progress, including a grade crossing separation program included in the 2021 bipartisan infrastructure bill, as well as record funding for the successful Section 130 program that upgrades technology and signaling at crossings."*

Some figures:

- According to the UIC safety database <https://safetydb.uic.org/>



SDB LC.pdf

- According to the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA), there are over 200,000 km (124,274 miles) of tracks in the EU. In recent years, a weekly average of six fatalities and an additional six serious injuries occurred at EU level crossings. Suicides are reported separately from accident fatalities. In 2018, on average more than seven suicides were recorded every day on EU railways, totalling 2,637. <https://www.era.europa.eu>
- According to OLI: *“Every three hours in the US, a vehicle or person is struck by a train.”* <https://oli.org/track-statistics/collisions-casualties-year>

Note to the editor:

- **The International Union of Railways (UIC)** is the worldwide railway organisation and is celebrating its centenary this year. ILCAD is part of the programme of major UIC events to mark this milestone. Visit <https://uic.org/safety/safety-at-level-crossings> and <http://www.ilcad.org>
- **The Association of American Railroads (AAR)** was founded in 1934 and is the world’s leading railroad policy, research, standard-setting and technology organisation focusing on the safety and productivity of the US freight rail industry.
- **The Federal Railroad Administration’s mission (FRA)** is to enable the safe, reliable, and efficient movement of people and goods for a strong America, now and in the future.
- **Operation Lifesaver, Inc. (OLI)** is a non-profit organisation and nationally recognised leader in rail safety education. Since 1972, OLI has been committed to preventing collisions, injuries and fatalities on and around railroad tracks and highway-rail grade crossings with the support of public education programmes in states across the US. Operation Lifesaver inc. is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2022.

Contacts:

- At UIC: com@uic.org or Isabelle Fonverne: fonverne@uic.org
- At AAR: Jeff Moller, JMoller@aar.org and Andy Elkins aelkins@aar.org
- At FRA: Barbara Barr, barbara.barr@dot.gov
- At OLI: Jennifer DeAngelis JDeAngelis@oli.org