

NCTCOG FACT SHEET

August 2023

QUICK TAKE

What:

Regional Freight Safety Initiatives are developed to create a safer environment for all roadway users: bicyclists and pedestrians, commuters, first responders and commercial motor vehicle operators.

Significance:

Trucks and freight trains take longer to stop than passenger vehicles, making it important for motorists to use caution when encountering them.

By the Numbers:

420+

The number of miles of truck lane restrictions in Dallas-Fort Worth. Thirty-four municipalities in the region have such restrictions. Following these rules can make the roads safer for all drivers.

Driver Awareness is Key to Freight Safety

North Texas sees an enormous volume of freight transported every day by semi-trucks and other commercial motor vehicles. These trucks are supplying gasoline, medical supplies, building materials, groceries and more. If you own it, a truck probably moved it at some point.

In the past five years, there have been an average of 321 truck-involved crashes per month in North Texas. The number of crashes has increased each of those years. By understanding the importance of proper driving around trucks, navigating traffic will be safer, faster and more efficient.

As the region's population continues to grow and freight traffic increases to supply the rising demand of consumer product deliveries, there is a greater potential for roadway incidents between automobiles and commercial motor vehicles. Many passenger vehicle drivers do not realize that these vehicles have "blind spots," where the truck driver cannot see passing vehicles. Additionally, heavy-duty vehicles can be difficult to maneuver, and the length of time needed to stop is about 40% greater than cars.

Truck drivers can also help make the roads safer by following the truck lane restrictions, which limit the lanes used by trucks on certain freeway corridors throughout the region. In these areas, trucks with three or more axles are prohibited from using the inside left lane, except when passing traffic. This eases congestion and reduces the number of truck-related crashes on the freeways. Learn more at www.FreightNTX.org.



Photo: Getty Images

By having respect for trucks on the road, passenger vehicles can help ensure traffic is safer, faster and more efficient.

Rail Safety

North Texas has a vast rail network that supports three major freight railroads, two short-line railroads, Amtrak, light rail and commuter rail. This creates large train volumes and provides the region with goods movement and public transportation services.

Nationally, a person or vehicle is hit by a train every three hours. NCTCOG is working with Operation Lifesaver to improve safety near railroad tracks. Railroad tracks are private property and it is illegal to be on or near them except at designated crossings. It is important for North Texans to follow proper safety precautions near the region's 2,400 plus at-grade crossings and remember the train always has the right-of-way.

Do not assume you can hear a train coming. Modern locomotives are much quieter than people think, and there are quiet zones established at many of the regional crossings. This means as a train approaches a crossing, it is not required to blow its horn. Always assume a train is coming when approaching a crossing and look both ways. Trains travel much faster than they appear to and can take up to a mile to stop. Do not try to outrun a train.

Since 2000, when there were 67 incidents in North Texas, the number of incidents has been trending downward. In 2022, there were only 36 incidents recorded. To continue this important safety trend, drivers and pedestrians should heed safety signals and warnings.

Safe Rail Crossing Habits

- Freight trains don't travel at fixed times. Always expect a train at each highway-rail intersection at any time.
- Today's trains are quieter than ever. Any approaching train is always closer and moving faster than you think.
- Pass through a highway-rail grade crossing only if you are sure you can completely clear the crossing without stopping.
- Wait to cross until you can see clearly in both directions. Multiple tracks may mean multiple trains.

Cross a train track only at a designated crossing. It's the only safe and legal place to do so. Anything else is trespassing and could prove fatal.



Examples of billboard advertisements that appeared throughout the region during the freight safety campaign.



North Central Texas
Council of Governments

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