



Grade Crossings Regulations: what you need to know

There are about 14,000 public and 9,000 private grade crossings along more than 40,000 kilometers of federally-regulated railway tracks in Canada. Transport Canada's [*Grade Crossings Regulations*](#) (the regulations) help improve safety at these crossings.

This information was extracted from Transport Canada's website: <https://www.tc.gc.ca/en/services/rail/grade-crossings/grade-crossing-regulations.html>

This document is primarily targeted for road authorities responsible for public crossings. However, information on private grade crossings is also provided at the end of the document.

What's a grade crossing?

A grade crossing is an intersection where a road, sidewalk, path or trail crosses railway tracks. Grade crossings are also known as level crossings, railway crossings or train crossings.

What do I need to know?

Under the [*Grade Crossings Regulations*](#), railway companies, road authorities (provinces, municipalities and band councils) and private authorities (farmers, commercial businesses or private individuals) share responsibility for managing the safety at federally-regulated grade crossings.

How do I know if this applies to me?

A grade crossing can fall under federal or provincial jurisdiction. The regulations apply to federally-regulated grade crossings. To find out if a grade crossing is Federal (F) or Provincial (P), locate your crossing on the [grade crossings map](#). If your grade crossing isn't listed on the map, please [contact us](#).

[For more information see the Public Grade Crossings page below.](#)



Public Grade Crossings

If you have a [public grade crossing](#) that is subjected to the *Grade Crossings Regulations*, this is what you need to know.

How do I know I have a public grade crossing?

You have a public grade crossing, if railway tracks intersect with a road that is owned, open and maintained by a public authority like a province, municipality or band council, and is used by the public.

Existing federally-regulated grade crossings must meet the requirements of the *Grade Crossings Regulations* **by November 28, 2021**. To see if a grade crossing is federally-regulated, look for your crossing on the [grade crossings map](#). If your grade crossing isn't listed on the map, please [contact us](#).

New or changes to grade crossings

If you're making changes to an existing crossing or building a new one you must meet the regulations immediately.

Look up the [Grade Crossings Handbook](#) for more information on how to follow the regulations.

About the Regulations

The [Grade Crossings Regulations](#) come into full effect on November 28, 2021 and will help improve safety at Canada's 14,000 public grade crossings.

The regulations aim to improve safety at grade crossings by:

- using [engineering best practices](#) to make sure all crossing users can have a safe crossing experience
- putting in place clear and [enforceable safety standards](#) for both new and existing crossings
- defining the [roles and responsibilities](#) of road authorities and railway companies

If railway tracks cross a public road, this crossing must meet the regulations.

Agreements with the Railways

If a road authority and railway company have filed an agreement with the [Canadian Transportation Agency](#) (CTA), the agreement overrules the roles and responsibilities listed in the regulations.

If an agreement exists and you can't find a copy, contact the railway or the CTA to get a copy. If you're not sure what railway company is operating in your community, you can find this information on the [grade crossings map](#).

Responsibilities of road authorities

As a road authority, you must meet the regulations by November 28, 2021. As such, you must share [safety-related information](#) with the railways that cross your public road, and decide on what changes (if any) are needed to make sure the grade crossing meets the regulations (see your [agreement](#) for any changes to these roles and responsibilities). Please contact the railway company who shares responsibility for your grade crossings to coordinate any assessments or improvements needed to meet the regulations by Nov 28, 2021. For your



convenience the following emails may be used to contact the Canadian National Railway company and the Canadian Pacific Railway company:

Canadian National Railway Contact Information:

- Grade Crossings Regulations Inquiries: rainfosharing@cn.ca
- General inquiries: contact@cn.ca.
- Private Grade Crossings Inquiries: private.crossing@cn.ca or passage.prive@cn.ca

Canadian Pacific Railway Contact Information:

- Grade Crossings Regulations Inquiries: crossing_compliance@cpr.ca
- Other Inquiries: community_connect@cpr.ca

Road authorities are responsible for:

- Designing, building, and maintaining a road approach **outside** of the railway right-of-way (contact the railway company to find out where the railway's property ends and yours begins)
- Installing and maintaining traffic control devices, except for stop signs that are installed on the same post as the [railway crossing sign](#) (also known as a crossbuck).
- Providing information that will affect the design of the crossing surface
- Maintaining [sightlines](#), including removing any trees or brush:
 - within the land where the road is located
 - on land near the grade crossing

To meet minimum [sightline](#) requirements, the regulations have flexible options that include reducing vehicle speed, or installing a [warning system](#).

For more information on what could work for your crossing, please refer to the [regulations](#).

Responsibilities of the railway companies

If a railway company's tracks cross a public road, then they must follow the requirements of the regulations (see your [agreement](#) for any changes to these roles and responsibilities).

Where applicable, railways must:

- Install and maintain:
 - a railway crossing sign
 - a number of tracks sign
 - an emergency notification sign
- Maintain the stop sign if it's installed on the same post as the railway crossing sign
- Install and maintain a warning system
- Install and maintain a crossing surface
- Make sure [sightlines](#) are maintained, including removing any trees or brush
 - within the railway right-of-way
 - over any land next to the railway property



Information Sharing

Better collaboration through sharing information

For existing public grade crossings, the regulations require road authorities and railway companies to share safety-related information with each other. This information will help both parties to decide on what upgrades, if any, are required to make sure the grade crossings comply with the regulations by November 28, 2021. To make this process easier, we've created forms for road authorities and railway companies:

- [Railway company information sharing form](#)
- [Road authority information sharing form](#)

Timeline

You must share information when building a new crossing or making changes to an existing one.

For existing crossings, information sharing should have been done by November 28, 2016, two years after the implementation of the *Grade Crossings Regulations*. If you haven't shared safety-related information, please do so immediately.

The standards

Railway companies and road authorities must work together to make sure that regulations, standards, and guidelines are applied and the best options are used to make crossings safe. We inspect grade crossings regularly to make sure they meet the safety requirements outlined in the regulations.

In the unfortunate event that you are unable to satisfy the minimum requirements, you may be subject to penalties for continued non-compliance. An Inspector from Transport Canada would give you their findings before any enforcement action is taken, and would be available to help you understand your options. However, until safety-related concerns are dealt with, one option may be that access to the crossing be restricted in order to make sure that all crossing users can stay safe.

Sightlines

A safe crossing can be easily seen. The regulations include formulas for deciding the area that must be kept clear of anything that could block a road user's view of an oncoming train. For more information on sightlines see: [Determining minimum sightlines at grade crossings](#).

Working together to protect public grade crossings

The regulations and Standards require road authorities and railway companies to work together on:

- blocked public grade crossings
- activity on or near a grade crossing
- stopping trains from whistling



Blocked public grade crossings

Under the *Grade Crossings Regulations*:

- Trains can't block a public grade crossing for more than five minutes when a road user needs to pass, unless the train is moving
- When emergency vehicles need to pass, railway companies must immediately clear any grade crossing
- If the municipality has a safety concern related to a grade crossing that is blocked, both parties must work together to find a solution. If no solution is found after 90 days, the municipality can contact Transport Canada

Activity on or near a grade crossing

If a railway company or road authority does any activity, like rail or road repair at or near a grade crossing, they must:

- share information about the activity with each other, and
- take temporary protection measures (for example, creating a detour) to deal with any threat to the safety of railway operations and the public

Stopping trains from whistling

Train whistling is an important way to keep drivers, cyclists and pedestrians safe when using public grade crossings.

Section 23.1 of the *Railway Safety Act* includes a process for stopping trains from whistling at a public grade crossing and is dependent on parameters being in place and may include:

- the grade crossing has an appropriate warning system which is based on the railway speed and the vehicle and pedestrian use, and the number of railway tracks going through the grade crossing

The municipality must also pass a resolution agreeing that whistling should not be used at that crossing.

We encourage railway companies and municipalities to work together to make sure that all the requirements have been met. If they disagree on this, they can contact us for a final decision.

Read the detailed procedure for [train whistling cessation](#).

Who's responsible for the cost?

Depending on the agreement you have with the railway company, or the one filed with the [Canadian Transportation Agency](#), the cost might be shared between the road authority and the railway. Generally, this information is outlined in the agreement.

If you need additional information on dividing the cost, agreements, or for any rail-related dispute, please contact the [Canadian Transportation Agency](#).



Funding is available

We have funding under the [Railway Safety Act](#) for eligible costs related to improving and closing crossings. Our [Rail Safety Improvement Program \(RSIP\)](#) gives funding in the form of grants and contributions to improve rail safety and reduce injuries and deaths related to rail transportation.

For more information on how to apply for funding, visit the [Rail Safety Improvement Program](#) website, or [contact the Transport Canada Rail Safety Improvement Program via email](#).

Contact us

For information about safety at your grade crossing, contact the regional offices listed below:

Transport Canada Regional Offices Contact Information:

Pacific: 604-666-0011

Prairie and Northern: 1-888-463-0521 or PNRWeb@tc.gc.ca

Ontario: 416-973-9820

Quebec: 514-633-3400

Atlantic: 506-851-7040

For general inquiries: [Transport Canada Rail Safety](#)

Telephone: 613-998-2985

Toll-free: 1-844-897-RAIL (1-844-897-7245)

Facsimile: 613-990-7767

Email: railsafety@tc.gc.ca

Private grade crossings

How do I know I have a private grade crossing?

You have a private grade crossing, if railway tracks intersect with a privately owned road that's owned and used by private parties, like farmers, commercial businesses or private individuals.

[For more information see the Private Grade Crossings page below.](#)



Private Grade Crossings

If you have a [private grade crossing](#) that's affected by the *Grade Crossings Regulations*, this is what you need to know.

Existing federally-regulated grade crossings must meet the requirements of the [Grade Crossings Regulations](#) by **November 28, 2021**. To see if a grade crossing is federally-regulated, look for your crossing on the [grade crossings map](#). If your grade crossing isn't listed on the map, please [contact us](#).

New or changed grade crossings

If you're changing an existing crossing or building a new one you must meet the regulations **immediately**.

Look up the [Grade Crossings Handbook](#) for more information on how to follow the regulations.

About the Regulations

The [Grade Crossings Regulations](#) come into effect on November 28, 2021 and will help improve safety at Canada's 9,000 private grade crossings.

The regulations aim to improve safety at grade crossings by:

- using [engineering best practices](#) to make sure all crossing users can have a safe crossing experience
- putting in place clear and [enforceable safety standards](#) for both new and existing crossings
- defining the [roles and responsibilities](#) of private authorities and railway companies

Agreements with the railways

If a private road owner and a railway company have an agreement filed with the [Canadian Transportation Agency](#) (CTA), their agreement overrules the roles and responsibilities listed in the regulations.

If an agreement exists and you can't find a copy, contact the railway or CTA to get a copy. If you're not sure what railway company is operating on your land, you can find this information on the [grade crossings map](#).

Responsibilities of the private crossing owners

As the owner of a private road that crosses over tracks of a railway, you have a role to play in making sure the requirements of the regulations are met by November 28, 2021. You must make sure that any of your new or existing private grade crossings meet the requirements of the regulations.

Private crossing owners must (where applicable):

- Maintain a road approach **outside** of the railway right-of-way (contact the railway company to find out where railway property ends and yours begins)
- Install and maintain traffic control devices, like a stop sign, on your land, if it isn't on the same post as the [railway crossing sign](#) (also known as crossbuck)
- [Make sure good sightlines](#) are provided over your land, up to the railway right-of-way, and are clear of any obstructions (i.e. Trees, brush, stored materials, equipment)



To meet minimum sightline requirements, the regulations have flexible options that include reducing vehicle speed, or installing a [warning system](#).

One of the main factors that helps with [deciding what sightlines might be needed](#), is the [design vehicle](#). A “design vehicle” is the type of vehicle that typically would be the longest and slowest vehicle expected to regularly use the grade crossing. Railway companies are responsible for choosing the “design vehicle” for private grade crossings. The railway might contact you to confirm the best “design vehicle” for your crossing, and to discuss what options could best deal with safety at your crossing.

This information is key in deciding what changes may be needed, if any, so that the grade crossing complies with the regulations. You may want to contact the railway company to share this information to make sure the design of the crossing makes sense with your use of it.

For more information on what options could work for your crossing, please refer to the [regulations](#).

Responsibilities of the railway companies

If the railway company’s tracks cross a private road, they must follow the requirements of the regulations (see your [agreement](#) for any variances to these roles and responsibilities).

Where applicable, railways must:

- Install and maintain:
 - a railway crossing sign
 - a number of tracks sign
 - an emergency notification sign
- Maintain the stop sign if it’s installed on the same post as the railway crossing sign
- Install and maintain a warning system
- Install and maintain a crossing surface and a road approach **within** the railway right-of-way
- Choosing design speed and the [design vehicle](#) for the private crossing
- Make sure good [sightlines](#) are maintained, including removing any trees or brush
 - within the railway right-of-way
 - over land next to the railway right-of-way, other than sightlines over land owned by a private crossing owner.

The standards

Railway companies, road authorities and private crossing owners must work together to make sure that regulations, standards and guidelines are applied and the best options are used to make crossings safe. We inspect grade crossings regularly to make sure they meet the safety requirements outlined in the regulations.

In the unfortunate event that you are unable to satisfy the minimum requirements, you may be subject to penalties for continued non-compliance. An Inspector from Transport Canada would give you their findings before any enforcement action is taken, and would be available to help you understand your options. However, until safety-related concerns are dealt with, one option may be that access to the crossing be restricted in order to make sure that all crossing users can stay safe.



Who's responsible for the cost?

Depending on the agreement you have with the railway company, or the one filed with the [Canadian Transportation Agency](#), the cost might be shared between the road authority/private road owner and the railway. Generally, this information is outlined in the agreement.

If you need additional information on dividing the cost, agreements, or for any rail-related dispute, please contact the [Canadian Transportation Agency](#).

Funding is available

We have funding under the [Railway Safety Act](#) for eligible costs related to improving and closing crossings. Our [Rail Safety Improvement Program \(RSIP\)](#) gives funding in the form of grants and contributions to improve rail safety and reduce injuries and deaths related to rail transportation.

You, a railway company or a road authority can apply to see if the proposed project is eligible for funding. For more information, see the [Rail Safety Improvement Program](#) website, or [contact the Transport Canada Rail Safety Improvement Program via email](#).

Information for private crossing owners

Other options that would limit your need to follow the regulations include:

- Grade Crossing Closure
- Combining Grade Crossings

In order to limit your obligations to meet the *Grade Crossings Regulations*, one option would be to close the grade crossing or combine your road access with another crossing. In order to close a grade crossing, you and the railway companies must agree to close the crossings. Please contact the railway company to find out more about these options. Funding is available under the [Rail Safety Improvement Program](#).

If you can't come to an agreement, contact the [Canadian Transportation Agency](#) to solve the dispute.

Please note that the regulations apply to both seasonal grade crossings as well as crossings that aren't actively in use, unless the grade crossing has been discontinued through the [Canadian Transportation Agency](#) process or special permission has been given.