

**Regulatory
Compliance
(Federal)
Issue: 05
Railroad Safety
July 26, 2012**

Safety BULLETIN

Railroad Safety

Railroad Crossings. A subject that we take for granted, yet, nearly every day you can read in the newspaper or hear on the news tragedies occurring on railroad right of ways.

Many municipalities in Louisiana have these right of ways streaming through their corporate limits. That is why proper signage along these avenues is imperative to ensure the safety of its citizens and to reduce the municipalities' liability.

There are two types of Railroad Crossing Control Devices. One is an Active Crossing Device and the other is a Passive Crossing Device. An active crossing device informs motorist and pedestrians of the presence of trains, locomotives or railroad cars on or near highway rail-grade crossings. Active warning devices may include any combination of Flashing Red Lights, Bells and Automatic gates. Passive warning devices are traffic control devices consisting of sign (s) and pavement markings to identify and direct attention to the location of a Highway-rail grade crossing. These devices advise highway users and pedestrians to take appropriate action. Signage **SHALL** have a crossbuck sign with a Yield or Stop sign attached; or a yield or stop sign set twelve (12') feet in advance of the crossbuck sign.

At this time, the railroad companies are replacing their old signage with the new Retro-Reflectivity signs. Municipalities should take advantage of this activity to make an assessment of all crossing grades (Active or Passive) that are within the jurisdiction of the municipality. This would ensure both compliance with federal regulations and safety of the users of the crossings and thus reduce the municipal liabilities.

This Assessment Documentation should include Time and Date of inspection, location of inspection, observations noted (i.e. readable and unreadable stop sign) and the action taken to correct the observation. The documentation **SHALL** be signed by the person doing the assessment and inspection of the railroad crossing grade. Risk management is asking Villages, Towns and Cities to take the initiative to do documented assessments.