



LEVEL CROSSING SAFETY

USER GUIDE FARMERS

Together we can keep private level crossings safe



Private level crossings

When the railways were first built, private level crossings were provided to enable landowners to access their land severed by the railway. These landowners and their successors in title are the **authorised user** of the crossings. The crossings are known as **user worked crossings** as they are operated by the user.

Why have you been sent this pack?

You are the authorised user of one of Britain's 3,500 user worked level crossings.

We know your crossing provides an important access route for you, your visitors or employees. Network Rail respects the legal rights of authorised users and puts a high priority on maintaining these crossings and keeping users, rail passengers and rail staff safe.

We have designed this pack to ensure you know your rights and responsibilities, as well as what you can expect from Network Rail, so everyone uses these crossings safely. As the authorised user it is your legal responsibility to brief anyone you allow to use the crossing.

What's in the pack?

This booklet is designed to help you understand the roles and responsibilities around level crossings. Each inserted information leaflet is for you to brief visitors, tenants or employees on how to use each type of user worked crossing.

- Generic user worked crossings.
- User worked crossings with a telephone.
- User worked crossings with miniature stop lights.

Incidents at user worked crossings

August 2010, Suffolk

A tanker was hit by a passenger train, derailling the train and injuring passengers.

The tanker driver did not use the telephone provided before crossing, and the authorised user did not share their risk assessment for the crossing with the employer of the tanker driver. The driver of the tanker has received a prison sentence for his actions.

September 2011, Norfolk

A tractor was hit by a train.

The tractor driver's colleague contacted the signaller to obtain permission to cross, a miscommunication lead to the collision.

February 2012, Wales

A van was hit by a passenger train.

The van driver had not used the telephone to get permission to cross. The driver has received a prison sentence for his actions.

October 2012, Scotland

An off-road vehicle was hit by a train.

The user did not ask for permission to cross. As a result of the collision the driver sustained serious injuries.



Safe use of user worked level crossings

The person using the crossing is responsible for operating it safely.

Follow the rules below that relate to your crossing:



Signs

- Read and follow all signs.
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Phones

- Use the telephone when the signs ask you to do so.
 - Call back the signaller if they have asked you to do so.
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Gates

- Close the gates after using the crossing, even if you are returning in a few minutes or if someone will be using the crossing shortly after you.
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Lights

- If there are miniature stop lights, never cross when the lights are red, only cross when the green light is on.
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Alarms

- If you hear the alarm, don't cross.
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Crossing

- If you see or hear a train coming, don't cross.
- Don't rely on the timetable. Not all trains run according to timetables, so always assume a train may be approaching.
- Check to see if your exit is clear before crossing.
- Cross quickly and safely.
- Never stop on a crossing.
- Open both gates before crossing with vehicles or animals.
- Ensure there is enough clearance between tall vehicles and the overhead lines.
- Ensure any low-bottomed vehicles can clear the raised area around the tracks to avoid grounding.
- Should vehicles breakdown on the crossing, make sure all passengers leave the vehicle and notify the signaller immediately.
- Always call us if you are planning to take livestock over the crossing.
- If animals stray onto the railway notify the signaller immediately.



Rights and responsibilities

You – the authorised user

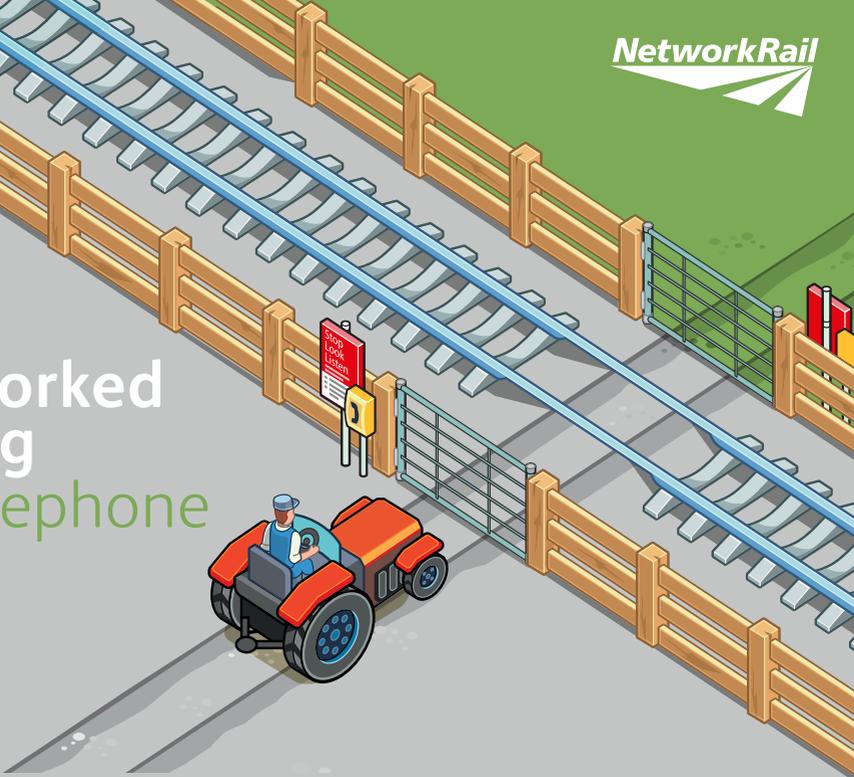
- You are legally entitled to use the private level crossing to access your land. However, it is the **responsibility of each user to establish whether it is safe to cross**.
- You can invite others (visitors, tenants or employees) to use the level crossing. However, it is **your responsibility to give each one a safety briefing**. You can use the information cards enclosed in this pack to help with this briefing.
- **Misusing** a level crossing puts you, rail passengers and rail staff at risk. Also, it is an **offence under legislation** which can result in a criminal prosecution or fine. For example, leaving the gates open after use can lead to a fine of up to £1,000.
- You should consider **how you use the crossing** and the vehicles you are taking across. Changes in gradient can cause grounding of vehicles, tall vehicles could hit overhead lines, and wide vehicles need enough room to pass between the gate posts. Contact us if you have any doubts on how you use the crossing or you change how you use it.
- If you are **selling your land** or transferring it to someone else, please provide us with the new owner's name and contact details so we can transfer user rights to them. The rights will normally end if ownership on the two sides of the railway is split.
- **Do not alter the level crossing** in any way, as you are not authorised to do so. Any unauthorised alterations could affect the safety of the crossing.

Network Rail

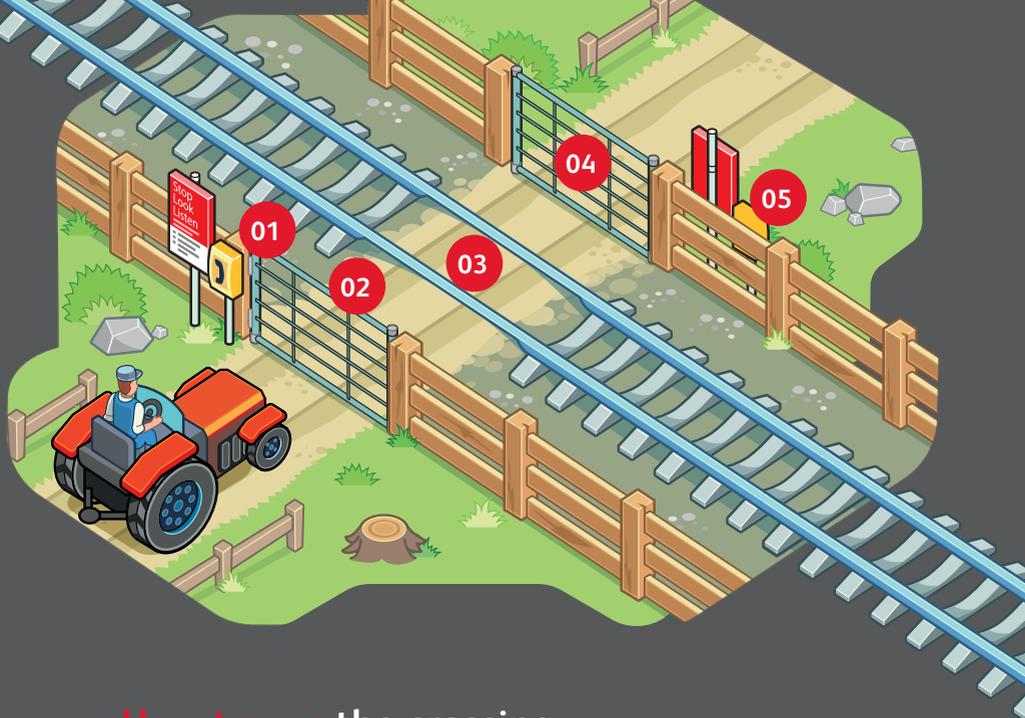
- We undertake regular **maintenance inspections and safety assessments**, and may need to access your land to reach the crossing. Your knowledge and experience as a user is vital – it helps us to keep the crossing safe for everyone.
- You will be invited to attend assessments, and if you have any concerns between these visits, we would like to hear from you.
- We will **maintain maximum sighting distance** by cutting grass, bushes and trees. This makes sure you have a clear view of trains approaching. Please let us know if you think vegetation needs cutting back.
- We can conduct a **safety briefing** on the safe operation of the crossing.
- If you are an employer, under **health and safety law** you have responsibility for your employees and visitors. You may need to produce a risk assessment or method statement for the use of the crossing. We are happy to help you with this process.
- To deter unauthorised use we recommend **locking level crossing gates**. We can provide chains, locks and keys, if requested.
- Even though we are not required to widen existing private crossings nor allow for change of use where there would be unacceptable risk or an increase in maintenance, we do understand that circumstances change. We will explore options with you, including suitable access such as wider gates, appropriate services e.g. for safe livestock crossing and, closing the level crossing and providing alternative arrangements, to meet your needs and improve safety.



User worked crossing with telephone



- Obey signs.
- If you are crossing with vehicles or animals, you must use the telephone to get permission to cross.
- When you have permission to cross, open the gates on both sides of the railway.
- Cross quickly and stay alert. Do not stop on the crossing.
- Close both gates after crossing, never leave them open.
- You must telephone railway staff after crossing if they instruct you to do so.
- If crossing with a vehicle, consider how long it will take to cross. How heavy is your vehicle and load? What's the clearance of your vehicle – will it hit lines above or is there a risk of it grounding?
- If crossing with animals, consider how long it will take to cross and whether they are likely to stray onto the railway.



How to use the crossing



You must use the telephone to get permission to cross if crossing with vehicles or animals.



When you have permission to cross, open the gates on both sides of the railway.



Cross quickly and stay alert, do not stop on the crossing.



Close both gates after crossing, never leave them open.



You must telephone railway staff after crossing if they instruct you to do so.

Pedestrians only

- Stop, look both ways and listen.
- Ensure you have enough time to cross safely, then cross quickly and stay alert.
- Close the gates behind you, never leave them open.

In an emergency, contact railway staff using the telephone at the crossing. Otherwise call 999.

To report a fault or get in touch with your local team, **call our National Helpline on 03457 11 41 41.**

networkrail.co.uk/levelcrossings

