



DMM Safety Alert: Mine Site Railroad Crossings

On May 17, 2012, a mine company owned over-the-road truck was struck by a train as it was leaving the mine site with a load. The mine entrance road crosses the railroad tracks near its intersection with a public road. This is an at-grade crossing, but is not equipped with cross-arms or lights. The train, traveling at approximately 10 MPH, sounded its horn as it approached the crossing. The truck driver did not hear or see the train and pulled onto the tracks, and stopped. The train went into an emergency stop and sounded its horn. The truck driver saw the train and tried to back up, but was struck before he could get clear of the tracks. There are adequate sight-lines in both directions at the crossing. The truck driver did not hear the train's horn because he was listening to music with earphones on. Fortunately, no one was injured although the truck was considerably damaged. To keep this type of accident from occurring in the future, the Virginia Division of Mineral Mining recommends the following:

- Ensure that mine and contractor personnel are adequately trained in railroad crossing safety (stop, look, listen, and never stop on tracks).
- Ensure proper sight-lines are maintained by removing tree limbs, brush, etc., that may affect visibility.
- Install and maintain adequate warning signs or signals at all at-grade crossings. Install automatic signals, if practical.
- Institute training and posting of any site specific rules or procedures involving railroad crossings.
- **It is a violation of Virginia motor vehicle law (46.2-1078) to operate a vehicle on the highways while using earphones on or in both ears.**

