

Rail Safety & Suicide Prevention Initiatives

JPB Technology, Operations,
Planning, and Safety (TOPS) Meeting
August 30, 2023



Overview

- Statistics, Trends, and Risk Factors
- 3 E's of Rail Safety
 - Engineering
 - Enforcement
 - Education – Community Engagement
- Caltrain Initiatives

Statistics, Trends, and Risk Factors

National Suicide Statistics

- 50,000 – 4% increase in 2022 (historical YOY increase)
- Overall, the 10th leading cause of death (varies by age group)
- Males 4X that of Females
- 98% are Firearms, Suffocation, Poisoning, Cutting and Falling
- Suicide by Train represents about 1%

Centers for Disease Control Data



FRA Trespasser Data Analysis

- Approximately 70% of all rail transit fatalities in the United States are the result of trespassing and suicides on ROW.
- 75% of trespassing casualties (fatalities and injuries) occur within 1,000 feet of an at grade crossing.
- 6% casualties occur in Stations, yards and tunnels
- 82% of trespassers are male, and most are of low socioeconomic status.
- 96% of freight rail suicide incidents occur on areas of track that do not have a barrier to restrict ROW access.

Caltrain Trespasser Strikes 2019-2023

Year	Trespasser Strikes	Fatalities	Suicide*	Unintended*	Pending
2023 YTD	11	9			9
2022	16	14	8	3	3
2021	13	11	9		2
2020	11	10	9	1	
2019	22	16	10	6	

* Coroner and Law Enforcement determine cause



Caltrain Trespasser Strike Analysis

- No clear trend as to specific location
- No clear trend as to time of day or year
- Align with FRA data
- 10% occur at Stations
- Most are intentional
- Transit Police – 50+ Trespasser Service calls monthly –
<50% contact made

Engineering



Engineering:

- State of Good Repair
 - Track maintenance, fencing, barriers
- Capital Improvement Projects
 - Crossings - Churchill, Meadows, San Mateo
 - Stations: SSF, Hillsdale
- Technology
 - Grade crossings
 - Motion/Intrusion detection systems
 - CCTV/Video analytics

SOGR – Fencing and Barriers

- Caltrain has an on-going fencing program to minimize pedestrian access to the right-of-way.
- Fencing repairs are continuous due to vandalism, vehicular accidents adjacent to our property and construction.

SOGR – Fencing and Barriers

- Feedback/Reports from train crews, MOW, Police and public
- Fence inspections are included with monthly hi rail inspections performed by Caltrain/TASI
 - The entire ROW is inspected biweekly by hi rail, on foot or on passenger trains.
- Repairs prioritized by Risk Based Hazard Management (RBHM)

SOGR – Fencing and Barriers

- Over the last 10 years, Caltrain has installed over 8.5 miles of new Right of Way (ROW) fencing.
- Goal is to fence off the entire ROW (52 miles x 2 = 104 miles)
- 86% (~90 miles) of our ROW has fencing or a barrier.
- Multiple locations cannot support fence installation:
 - Tunnels, bridges, stations, etc.

SOGR – Fencing and Barriers

- Additional funds requested in future years to expedite ROW fencing.
- \$800K Fencing funds – Palo Alto
- Suicide Prevention and No Trespassing Signage are placed every 528 feet along the 52-mile corridor.
- California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) 26D prohibits barriers within 8'6" on tangent & 9'6" on curve tracks.

Technology

- Grade crossing design, lights, etc.
- CCTV / Analytics
- See Something Say Something App

Enforcement



Enforcement:

- Transit Police
 - San Mateo County Sheriff's Department
- Specialized Training
 - Crisis Interventions
- Emergency Response Team
 - Proactive outreach
- First Responder Outreach
- Electrification Safety

Crisis Intervention Training (CIT)

- 40-hour training provided to all Transit PD Deputies and Supervisors
- Provides foundational mental health awareness and understanding on a range of topics:
 1. Common types of mental illness
 2. Assessment of medication information
 3. Skills for de-escalation of potentially violent situations
 4. Specific strategies for suicide intervention
- Transit PD (Sherriff's Office) is currently in the process of providing their Deputies and Supervisors with Enhanced Crisis Intervention Training (ECIT)
 - While CIT focuses on mental health awareness and ability to recognize potential behavioral health concerns, ECIT deals with the operational aspect of specific crisis scenarios

Psychiatric Emergency Response Team

- Established by the Sherriff's office to review all Transit PD cases involving potential mental illness
- PERT units consist of one Sherriff's Detective and one Licensed Mental Health Professional from Behavioral Health and Recovery Services
- PERT conducts follow-up investigation when necessary, with the goal of connecting patients and families with services and resources that can:
 - Help manage acute crisis
 - Prevent tragic outcomes
 - Reduce hospitalizations and incarcerations
- PERT functions as the homeless liaison for the Sherriff's Office and conducts regular outreach to the San Mateo County homeless population



**SAN MATEO
COUNTY HEALTH**



Trespassing and Intrusion Programs

- Transit Police focus on dangerous behavior such as walking on tracks, cutting through and/or crawling through holes in fences and walking on bridges and in tunnels.
- Signs prohibiting trespassing are posted at least every 600 feet along the Caltrain right-of-way. Transit Police use these signs to educate potential trespassers and issue citations for violations.
- To address a multi-lingual community, the signs display a pictorial of a person crossing railroad tracks with a standard red circle and slash through the picture. In addition, they show large warning messages of “No Trespassing” and “Active Railroad.”
- Signs are painted on both sides with anti-graffiti paint and are double-bolted to posts.

Trespassing and Intrusion Programs

- Rail Operations employees are trained to report trespassers on Caltrain's (ROW).
- Train crews are also instructed to report holes in the ROW fencing.
- The reporting process for any observed ROW safety concerns is as follows:
 - Train crew makes radio call to Central Control Facility (CCF) dispatcher
 - CCF dispatcher notifies Transit Police
 - Transit Police instruct trains to slow down until officers clear the area
 - Once trespasser leaves or is removed by police, trains can resume speed
 - Engineering is notified to repair any observed holes in the fencing (RBHM)



See Something, Say Something

Do your part to keep the rails safe! **Call Transit Police at 1.877.SAF.RAIL (1.877.723.725) immediately** to report any unsafe situation or suspicious activity, such as children playing near the tracks or people hanging out along the right of way.

Save the number in your cell phone for quick and easy access.

Caltrain
Safe



First Responder – Outreach/Training

- Meeting with Palo Alto - City, Emergency Management, PD
- Fire and Police Training on-going
- Segment 3 and 4 areas completed
- August – SF, SSF, San Mateo
- September – Burlingame, Millbrae, Hillsdale, San Bruno
- October – Redwood City, San Carlos
- First Responder Live Drill - October



Safety Card - Electrification

- Energized Train System – 25KV can be dangerous
- Don't touch Overhead wires and ground cables
- Trains are quieter and accelerate faster
- See Tracks – expect a Train!
- Cross at designated crossings
- See Something Say Something
- Suicide Crisis Line



Safety Card

CALTRAIN IS NOW ELECTRIC!

The new electric train system can be ***dangerous and even life-threatening***

See something unsafe?

Call 1.877.SAF.RAIL
(1.877.723.7245)

For any emergency on Caltrain, to report suspicious activity, or if you see a damaged electrical wire.

24/7 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:

Call or Text 988

Social Services Hotline:

Call 211

caltrain.com/safety

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STAY SAFE BY KNOWING THESE SIMPLE SAFETY TIPS:

CALTRAIN IS ENERGIZED:

The Caltrain system is now electric. Wires and ground cables carry 25,000 volts of electricity and can be dangerous. **Never approach or touch overhead wires or equipment with things like ladders, antennas, and most importantly, yourself!**

ALWAYS EXPECT A TRAIN:

New electric trains are quieter and faster than you think. They can run on any track, at any time, from either direction. Stay safe and stay off the tracks.

CROSS ONLY AT DESIGNATED CROSSINGS:

The only safe place to cross tracks is at designated public crossings with a crossbuck, flashing red lights or a gate. Crossing anywhere else is illegal.

Caltrain

Community Engagement - Education

Tasha Bartholomew, Manager, Media Relations

Partnership with Operation Lifesaver

- Since the 1990s
- Annual contributor to CAOL
- Staff serves on OLI National Advisory Council (NAC)
- NAC meets twice a year - creates educational projects with FRA and FTA funding
- Helps develop and edit all rail safety outreach materials used nationwide through OLI's Materials Review Committee

Caltrain & Operation Lifesaver Projects

- Stop Track Tragedies video
 - Shares the powerful stories of survivors and family members to help prevent future tragedies on the railroad
- New safety posters
- Rail safety pledge



Education:

- Don't Shortcut Life Rail Safety Education Program
- Free presentations to communities
- Open to all ages
- In person or virtual

The Importance of Messaging

- Communicating as an agency
 - Rail Safety
- 2009 Palo Alto suicides
 - Changed thinking
- Addressing the issue
 - Mental & Behavioral Health Organizations

Key Partnerships



U.S. Department of Transportation



ADVANCING TRANSPORTATION INNOVATION FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD



SAN MATEO COUNTY HEALTH
**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
& RECOVERY SERVICES**



COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA
Behavioral Health Services
Supporting Wellness and Recovery



Crisis Text Line



Help is just a text away

Text BAY to 741741

Free, 24/7, confidential crisis support by text

For more information on suicide prevention resources, visit www.caltrain.com/suicideprevention

Help is just a text away

Caltrain has formed a new partnership with Crisis Text Line, a service that offers free, 24/7 anonymous counseling for individuals who may be depressed, having suicidal thoughts or suffering from a mental disorder.

Here's How it Works:

- 1) A person in crisis should text the word **BAY** to **741741**.
- 2) A trained crisis counselor receives the text and responds quickly.
- 3) The crisis counselor helps the individual stay cool, calm, safe and healthy by using effective active listening and suggested referrals—all through text messages on the line's secure platform. The goal response time is five minutes.

CRISIS TEXT LINE |



FRA Partnership

Suicide Prevention for US Rail (SPUR)

Topics explored in last year include:

- Quality of Life Teams/Mobile Crisis Units
- Use of Advanced Technologies (e.g. surveillance, detection)
- Impact on Train Crews
- Effective Data Use
- Trespass and Suicide Prevention in Rural Communities

Past Activities

- Public Service Announcements
- Onboard/station rail safety blitz
- Suicide prevention training for staff
- Installed 250 suicide prevention signs at stations
- Dedicated suicide prevention resource page (<https://www.caltrain.com/rider-information/safety-security/suicide-prevention>)
- Raised \$25,000 for American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's Out of the Darkness Walks
- Sponsored the Caminar for Mental Health Symposium
- Media Roundtable

Future Activities

This year's rail safety and suicide prevention activities, include:

- Rail Safety Month - September
- Operation Safe Track participation – Sept. 19
- Rail Safety Booth at SF Public Electric Train Tour – Sept. 23
- Updated rail safety brochures
- New Electrification postcards
- Safety Roadshows at various agency locations
- Suicide Prevention Training Lunch & Learn sessions for employees – Sept. 14 and 21

Recap and Next Steps

Next Steps

- Continue refreshing suicide prevention signs
- Grade Crossing Improvements
- Technology – Pursue Grants
- Continue partnerships with Operation Lifesaver and local health and safety departments
- Electrification Education

Suicide prevention and safety program is contingent on the availability of funding.

Questions

FOR MORE INFORMATION

WWW.CALTRAIN.COM

