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Submission LC/6
Received
Road Safety Committee

To Executive Officer
Road Safety Committee
Parliament House
EAST MELBOURNE Vic 3002

In response to the invitation to submit suggestions for improved safety at rail level crossings I make the following suggestions.

At the outset it is abundantly clear that while one vehicle has absolute right of way an accident is very likely. This is because it only requires one driver (usually the road vehicle driver) to make a mistake to create the accident. In normal road vehicle situations, both drivers are usually taking precautions to avoid a collision.

My comments are not inclusive of one single proposal to alleviate the possibility of an accident at a rail level crossing, but suggestions of a number of actions which could be implemented to suit the particular type of crossing. e.g Highway crossings, bitumen main road crossings, gravel secondary road crossings etc.

Some proposals that could be considered within the mix :-

1. Flashing lights at all major crossings . (this is current practice)
2. Advance warning signs and flashing lights where appropriate
3. If possible signs to be lit like the variable speed signs on the Melbourne Ring Road
4. Reflective rumble strips at the location of the advance warning signs
5. Rumble strips to indicate the angle at which the train line intersects the road. These should be on white parallel lines (This is very important as the train often is coming from a direction behind the road vehicle or at an angle where it is not readily observed due to geographical and topography features)
6. Front of trains to be painted with yellow and orange stripes to distinguish the train from background colours.
7. All V/ Line trains to have two flashing lights in operation when train is moving. Again for improved recognition particularly where some background lighting may occur by static lights or vehicle lights.
8. All RAIL signs to be a bright yellow,. (The colour used by NSW along the Pacific Highway and are very effective)
9. 'Rail Crossing ' painted on the road surface. (current practice)

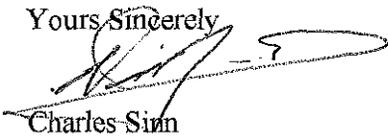
10. Unsealed minor roads need special treatment as the surface does not relate to the above.. I have found that a panel each side of the road reading ' Cross Roads' has been very helpful. With the words 'RAIL CROSSING' this could be considered. This could also be an option at all crossings.
11. Departmental plans of each level crossing to include features of at least one kilometre in radius from crossing.
12. Request Local Councils to review plans before upgrading. (They can highlight matters such as topography, type of vehicle usage, sun glare etc.)
13. Continued education programs to create awareness by vehicle drivers
14. Review rules for trains approaching crossings.
15. Investigate technology aids available for radio / computer interaction.

Of special interest is the fact that many crossings are not now operative . While these structures are in place they tend to contribute to a lessening of care by vehicle drivers thinking that crossings which are used rarely are actually abandoned. Therefore any crossing in place is likely to have trains crossing, all others should be removed.

Clearly, the only effective way to avoid serious accidents on major highway road/rail intersections is by the construction of a road overpass. This is very costly but should be considered in some instances.

I submit the above in the hope that at least some suggestions may be incorporated into the inquiry into improving safety at level crossings. There will obviously be many more from other sources.

Yours Sincerely



Charles Sinn