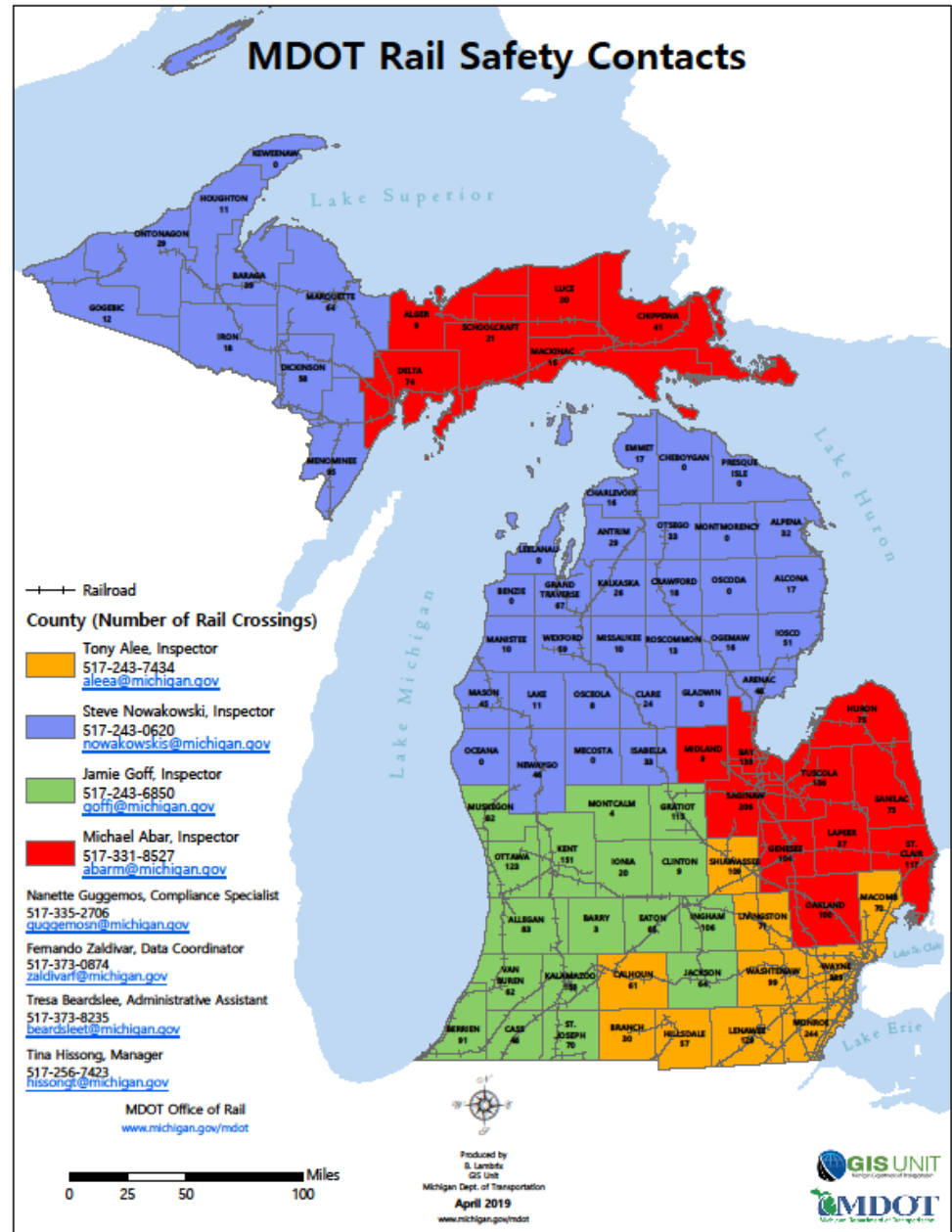




***Rail Safety Section – Regulatory
Highway Maintenance Conference
May 1, 2019***

Rail Safety Section Statewide Coverage

[www.michigan.gov/
mdotrail](http://www.michigan.gov/mdotrail)



RAIL SAFETY SECTION

WHAT DO WE DO?

- **On Site Crossing Inspections Reviews of public crossings, approximately 2,300 crossings per year.**
- **Diagnostic Study Team Reviews (DSTRs) For road projects.**
- **Legal Orders & Enforcement.**
- **Assist Road Authorities and Railroads with crossing issues.**



WHAT IS A DIAGNOSTIC STUDY TEAM REVIEW (DSTR)?



A DSTR team consists of knowledgeable representatives from MDOT, the Road Authority and the Railroad.

The MDOT Railroad Safety Inspector facilitates.

The Team reviews the railroad crossing configuration, including the surrounding roadway, and the road/trail/or track project specifics to determine if safety enhancements are warranted.

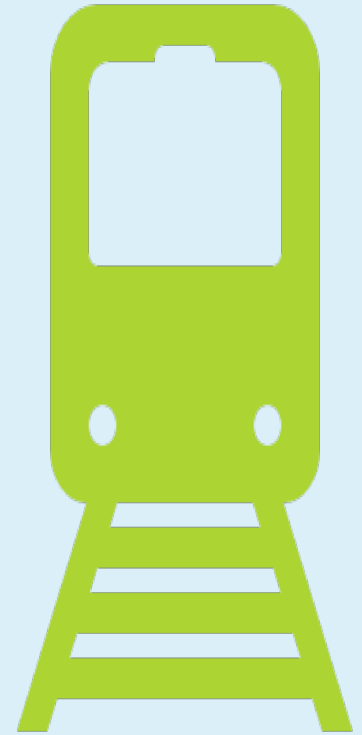
DSTRS FOR ROAD PROJECTS



- Are held when changes will be made to the width, height or configuration of the roadway.
- When traffic flow or volumes will change during construction.
- If changes to the roadway will increase permanent traffic volumes.
- If crossing surfaces need to be addressed.

WHEN AND HOW TO CONTACT US

- **When a road or trail project will take place within 250' of a public railroad crossing.**
- **Safety concerns with a crossing.**
- **Rough crossing surfaces.**
- **Obtain a Diagnostic Study Team Review Request (1425) form from the MDOT Website (Michigan.gov/MDOTRail) under the *Safety Regulations* Section**



HOW WE HELP YOU

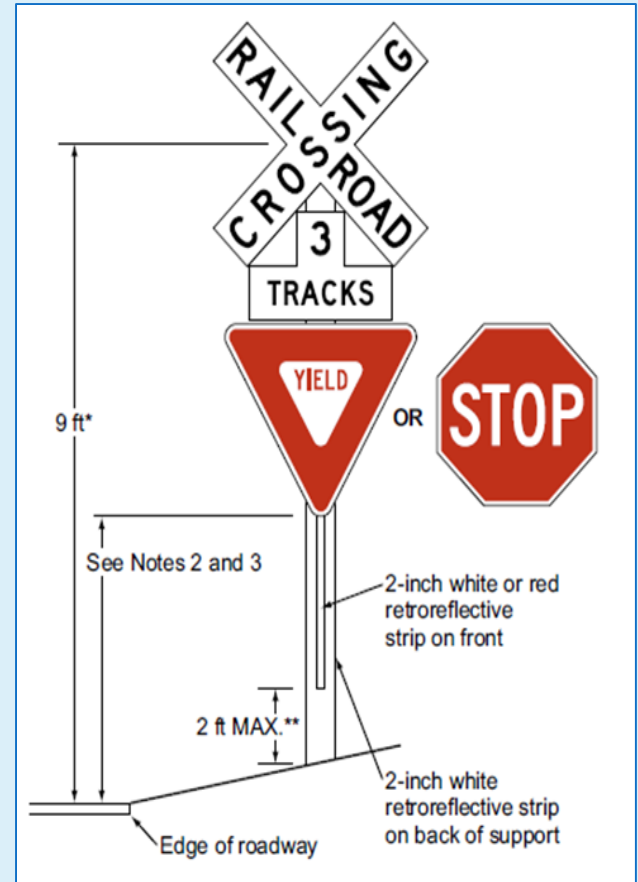


- ❖ **Share communications and mandates**
- ❖ **Share knowledge and best practices relating to crossing safety**
- ❖ **Work with Railroads to resolve your crossing complaints**
- ❖ **Open the door of communication between railroads & road authorities**

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Federal Railroad Administration Mandate:

- All crossbuck only crossings must have Yield or Stop signs in place by **December 31, 2019**.
- Road authorities are the responsible party to install and maintain the signs.



IMPORTANT NOTICE

Road Authorities,

Please be aware of forthcoming changes that may affect railroad crossings in your jurisdiction:

Per the Federal Highway Administration, by December 31, 2019 **passive crossings that are protected by Crossbucks only, must have a Yield or Stop sign installed** either on the same support as the Crossbuck sign or on a separate support at a point where the highway vehicle is to stop, or as near to that point as practical. In all cases, the Yield or Stop sign is now considered part of the Crossbuck Assembly.



old crossbuck standard

new crossbuck standard



The details of the Crossbuck Assembly are described in Section 8B.04 of the current Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices and shown in Figures 8B-2 and 8B-3.

Paragraph 5 of Section 8B.04 states that a YIELD sign *shall* be the default traffic control device for a Crossbuck Assembly.

Paragraph 6 states that the use of STOP signs at passive grade crossings should be limited to unusual conditions where requiring all vehicles to make a full stop is deemed essential by an engineering study that considers factors such as lines of sight to approaching trains, highway and railroad characteristics including the number of tracks and the speeds and number of trains and vehicles, and crash history at the crossing.

Indiscriminate use of STOP signs at passive grade crossings can result in poor compliance, which increases the collision risk at the crossing.

If you are considering installing STOP signs at a crossing, please contact the proper MDOT Railroad Safety Inspector via email (see the attached MDOT Rail Safety Contacts Map) and provide the Inspector with the location of the crossing and the US DOT/National Inventory Number (found on the blue notification sign at the crossing). The Inspector will then review our data to obtain specific details of the crossing and provide you with information that may assist in determining if STOP signs are appropriate for the crossing.

Also, please be sure to transfer/include the blue notification signs with any crossbuck assembly modifications as this sign is required by the Federal Railroad Administration. Thank you for helping to make Michigan railroad crossings safe! Please contact me with any questions you may have regarding this matter.

Tina Hissong, Manager
MDOT Rail Safety Section
517-256-7423



SOMETHING GOOD TO KNOW

Exempt Sign Changes

- School buses and vehicles transporting hazardous material can utilize Exempt signs at crossings.
- MDOT approval must be granted to use Exempt signs. (DSTR process)



R15-3P



W10-1aP



WINTER'S COMING!

TIPS FOR SNOW PLOWING/SALTING AT AND NEAR RAILROAD CROSSINGS

- ◆ Reduce snowplow pressure and raise snowplow blades slightly when plowing over railroad tracks to avoid catching and/or gouging railroad materials with the snowplow blade.
- ◆ Avoid piling snow in front of railroad crossing warning devices, in areas that could block motorist view of approaching trains and under railroad gate mechanisms.
- ◆ Avoid piling snow in front of railroad bungalows/houses and railroad access roads parallel and adjacent to the tracks (railroads use these weekly/monthly to access their property & equipment).
- ◆ Reduce truck speeds when plowing around railroad crossings to help prevent damage to automatic warning devices (lights and gates) by the force of the snow hitting them.
- ◆ Do not pile snow on track, as this creates a potential damage to train equipment and causes derailments.
- ◆ Apply salt or gravel to railroad crossing approaches to assist motorists in maintaining adequate stopping distances. When possible, clear-off the railroad pavement markings on the roadway approaches.
- ◆ Never dump salt directly on railroad crossings. Salt causes circuitry wiring to short out, causing malfunctions to the lights and gates.

HOW CAN YOU HELP US?



- Submit updated average daily traffic counts every 3 years for crossing locations
- Provide updates on contact information to Tresa Beardslee
- Participate in the DSTR process
- Complete Ordered work on time
- **Read our correspondence!! (please)**





*Office of Rail: Local Programs
Highway Maintenance Workshop
May 1, 2019*

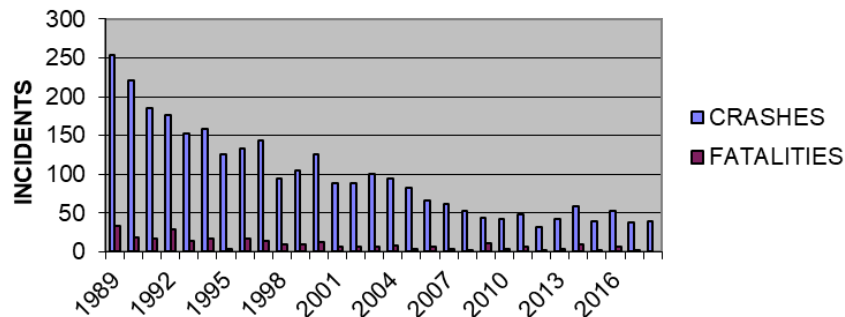
LOCAL GRADE CROSSING PROGRAM WARNING DEVICE ENHANCEMENTS

14

- ▶ 4300 local crossings
- ▶ 2100+ with no lights/gates
- ▶ 35-45 projects/year
- ▶ Importance of good data!
- ▶ Case study road project



30-YEAR HIGHWAY-RAILROAD CROSSING
CRASHES & FATALITIES



- ▶ Federal/State funding
- ▶ Record low crashes
- ▶ **0 car/train deaths in 2018!**
- ▶ 90% Crash reduction
- ▶ Crossing Closure Program

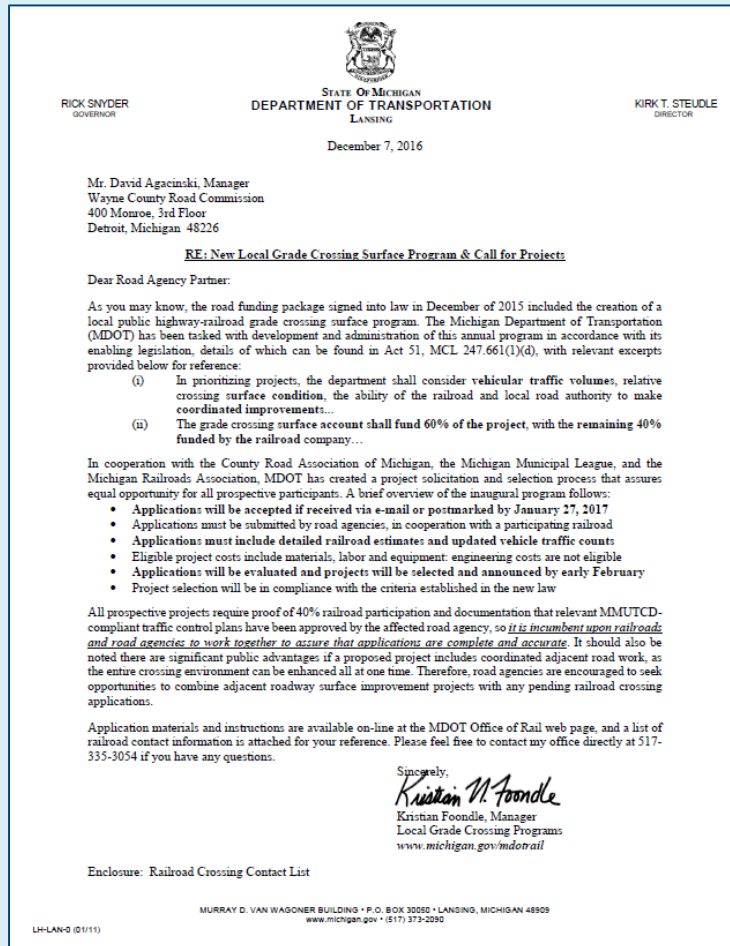
LOCAL GRADE CROSSING PROGRAM ROADWAY PROJECT COORDINATION

- Pre-Project Planning
- Alternative Solutions
- LAP Coordination
- Financial Assistance



- 3-6 Month Design
- 2-3 Month Material Lead
- 3-4 Week Installation
- *Authorization Required!*

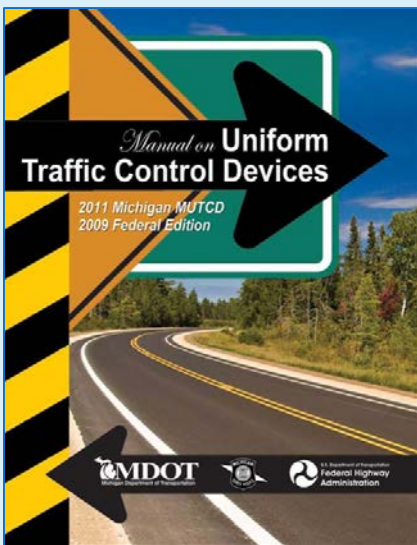
LOCAL GRADE CROSSING PROGRAM NEW SURFACE FUNDING



- \$3M Annual Program
- Eligible to Road Agencies
- 100 Applications/year
- 55 Projects/year
- Summer 2019
Next Call for Projects

OFFICE OF RAIL GUIDANCE & SUPPORT

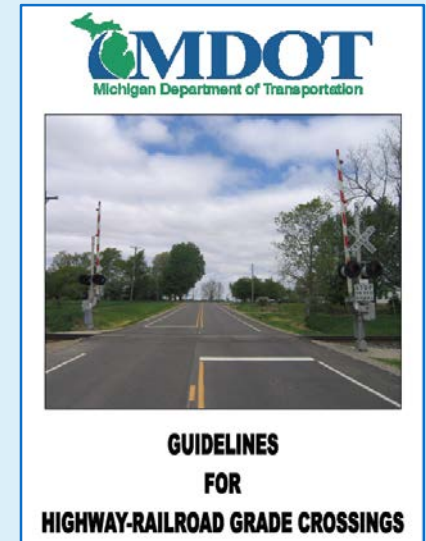
- Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices
- Guidelines for Highway-Railroad Grade Crossings
- Railroad Code (Public Act 354 of 1993)



CONTACTS

- Rail Safety
Tina Hissong, 517-256-7423
- Local Grade Crossings
Kris Foondle, 517-335-3054

www.michigan.gov/mdotrail





Questions / Answers
Thank You!