



Yield Signs at Railroad Crossings

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How many crossings are affected?

Idaho has more than 1,450 railroad crossings in urban and rural areas of the state. YIELD signs recently replaced STOP signs at most of the 865 crossings



defined as “passive” - crossings that do not have “active” features such as flashing red lights or crossing gates that block the approach to railroad tracks.

By the end of 2019, the various railroad companies operating in Idaho had completed the switch from STOP signs to YIELD signs at most crossings.



This sign change was made because Idaho law recently changed after national research showed that YIELD signs were a more effective traffic-control measure at these crossings.

The changeover also made the signage at these passive crossings consistent with the signage at railroad crossings throughout the rest of the United States.

How did the signs change? Why?

YIELD signs are the better traffic-control measure in most cases. However, in rare cases the railroad company and the local road agency (which is sometimes ITD) will conduct an engineering study that supports a STOP sign instead of a YIELD sign at the crossing.

Research in the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 470 stated that YIELD is the more effective sign for passive crossings. The change was further propelled by the national move to YIELD signs at passive crossings, and by the repeal of an old Idaho law that required STOP signs at passive crossings in Idaho. The Idaho Legislature repealed the law through House Bill 208 in 2019.

Link to NCHRP Report 470: http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/nchrp_rpt_470-b.pdf

What should drivers do to remain safe?

When approaching a crossing, drivers should be alert and aware, look both ways, look for train lights at night and listen intently for sounds of an approaching train. Drivers should only proceed across the tracks when it is safe to do so and the tracks are clear.



For more information on safety at railroad crossings, please visit: www.facebook.com/idahooperationlifesaver/