SAFETY TIPS from Brett Boston, Environmental Health and Safety.

There are several “NEVERS” in life. NEVER sword fight with Zorro. NEVER take a knife to a gunfight. And NEVER pick a fight with a train! Because of the close proximity of the rail line to the University, a few safety tips are in order as reminders.

- If you are stopped at a crossing with only flashing lights you should always leave at LEAST 15 feet between the front on you vehicle and the tracks. Remember, trains are much wider than the tracks they run on.
- If your car ever breaks down on the tracks (as happens in so many movies), get out of the car immediately! This should be a no-brainer, but people are killed every year because they keep trying to start the engine instead of bailing out.
- Drive defensively to be sure that traffic, or the automatic arm coming down at a crossing, doesn’t box you in on the track.
- Recognize the warning signs emanating from the train itself. Usually a shrill, high-pitched whistle or very loud horn. The Department of Transportation requires that warnings be sounded a quarter-mile before a public crossing, and repeated until the train is in the crossing.
- While we are on the subject of Department of Transportation, ever wonder why the trains park on the track? No, it’s not to make you late. The engineers are limited as to the number of hours they can be at the controls. If they hit their limit, the train stops and another engineer must be driven out to the location to replace the one coming off duty regardless of where that is. Now that is what I call strict!

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