

Caution, Railroad Crossing

Getting your horse trailer stuck on the railroad tracks with your horses inside is a nightmare scenario but one that's far too common according to the equestrian roadside assistance provider USRider. While studying more than 200 horse trailer accidents, USRider and Drs. Tomas and Rebecca Gimenez noticed a number of accidents where gooseneck trailers became lodged on raised railroad tracks. Many of these incidents resulted in loss of human and/or equine life. Although bumper-pull trailers can also be affected, gooseneck designs seem to be more prone to the problem.

"From a practical standpoint, most railroad crossings are built up, making them slightly higher than the surrounding roadway. Therein lies the problem," says Mark Cole, managing member of USRider. "When the truck tires pass over the railroad bed and start approaching the lower roadway grade, the rear tires can also be on the roadway grade on the other side of the tracks, causing the front of the gooseneck trailer to bottom out on the tracks."

Look for raised tracks or clearance warnings, and take an alternate, safer route. If your trailer is ever stuck on railroad tracks, call 911. The dispatchers can alert the railroad companies to the situation. Then, unload all humans and horses. The removal of horses may lighten the trailer enough to move it off the tracks.

For more information, visit www.usrider.org.