



City of Rocklin



Quiet Zone Information

What Is a Quiet Zone?

According to the US Department of Transportation, Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), a quiet zone is defined as a segment of a rail line within one or a number of consecutive public highway-rail (roadway) grade crossings at which locomotive horns are not routinely sounded.

Will we still hear train horns in the Quiet Zone?

Yes. A Quiet Zone does not mean you will not hear train horns. Railroad employees will use the locomotive horn to comply with other federal and railroad regulations and if the locomotive engineer deems there is an emergency situation to provide a warning to vehicle operators, pedestrians, trespassers, crews of other trains, animals, etc. In addition, the rule does not apply to horn use within the Amtrak passenger train station adjacent to the Rocklin Road highway-rail crossing. Engineers will still sound the horn when departing the station and may blow when entering the station to warn passengers that might be standing too close to the platform's edge.

What is the process for establishing a Quiet Zone?

The FRA's Train Horn Final Rule (49CFR222) went into effect on June 24, 2005. Along with establishing a national protocol for horn use, it enables communities to establish quiet zones by reducing the risk caused by lack of horns. The rule identifies several ways communities can silence the regular use of horns at crossings. One way is by installing median barriers on either side of the crossing. The City, working with the FRA, California Public Utilities Commission, Union Pacific and Amtrak has determined the best additional safety measures to mitigate the loss of the train horn. Median barriers restrict driver access to the opposing lanes and prevent vehicle drivers from driving through or around lowered crossing gates. These barriers have shown a significant reduction in the number of vehicle violations at crossing gates. Due to Rocklin's strong commitment for public safety, the City has decided to install median barriers at all five Quiet Zone crossings.

How are the safety devices being funded?

Each year, the City receives a grant from the State Public Transportation Modernization, Improvement and Service Enhancement Account (PTMISEA). These funds are specific in nature and may only be used for transit-related improvements, enhancements or expansion. In November 2012, the Council approved the City's PTMISEA funds for three projects, including the railroad crossing safety improvements needed to establish a Quiet Zone.

There are five streets and six public crossings affected by Rocklin's Quiet Zone:

- Farron Street
- Americana Way
- Rocklin Road
- Del Mar Avenue
- Midas Avenue (2 crossings)



Why has train noise increased in recent years?

Prior to the Federal rule, individual states mandated train horn use. Since the Federal rule was enacted in 2005, railroad employees must blow the horn 15-20 seconds prior to occupying a public highway-rail crossing. The State of California also mandates train horn use at private crossings. The Federal rule states that engineers would sound the train horn with two long, one short and one long blast that shall be repeated or prolonged until the locomotive occupies the crossing. Also, due to improvements in track structure and tunnels over Donner Pass in 2009, Union Pacific has now begun to run more freight trains through Rocklin. Using the Donner Pass route substantially reduces travel time and the efficiency of train movements.

Does the City assume an liability with implementation of the Quiet Zone?

Establishment of a Quiet Zone does not transfer any additional liability or risk to the City. The railroad is responsible for railroad property and the City maintains responsibility for City property.

Safety Tips

- Parents are encouraged to talk to their children about train and rail safety and make it clear that they are never to play near the tracks or trestles or walk across tracks except at designated pedestrian or roadway crossings, the ONLY legal, safe place to cross tracks. Railroad tracks, trestles, yards and equipment are private property. Walking or playing on them is not only dangerous, it's illegal. Trespassers can be arrested and fined.
- Anyone crossing the tracks should turn off electronic devices including cell phones and music players. Headphones or earbuds should be removed to ensure focus is on any trains that may be approaching.
- The trestle between Midas Avenue & Americana Drive is the private property of Union Pacific and must NEVER be used as a pathway or place to play.
- Railroads in Rocklin are patrolled by both Union Pacific Police and City of Rocklin Police. If you see anyone on the trestle or tracks, call the Rocklin Police Department at (916) 625-5400.
- For more safety tips, visit the Operation Lifesaver website at www.oli.org

Railroad Crossing History & Statistics

- All public railroad crossings in Rocklin are equipped with lights, bells and gates that provide an audible and visual warning that a train is approaching. This will not change with the implementation of the Quiet Zone.
- From the early days of trains in the U.S., train whistles and horns were the only device used to alert pedestrians to an oncoming train. As passenger vehicles became more common in the early 20th century, passive signs were added at crossings. By 1950, protection generally included bells and flashing lights. The use of gates became more common in the 1960s and 70s. Many communities, including Rocklin, retrofit existing crossings with gate arms. The Farron Street crossing was equipped with gates in 1977 and the Rocklin Road crossing was equipped with gates in 1978. All other crossings installed gates at the time of construction.



Courtesy of the Rocklin Historical Society

- There are 36 established Quiet Zones in 24 communities in California including Elk Grove and Sacramento. Nationwide, there are nearly 600 communities with established Quiet Zones.
- According to the Federal Highway Administration, two-gate crossing barriers with lights reduces collisions by 88% as compared to signage alone and reduces injuries accidents by 93%. Median barriers reduce violations (i.e., driving around the gates) by 80%, making the two-gate crossing & median barrier combination very effective.
- Per the FRA, in California last year, 100% of rail-related fatalities were people who disregarded the signs and signals at crossings or along the railroad's right-of-way. That means that in our state, 110 people died needlessly.

Public Outreach & Additional Information

- Go to the City website for more information regarding the Quiet Zone (www.rocklin.ca.us/quietzone).
- Public Hearings:
 - ♦ City Council approves & funds 3 transit projects including Quiet Zone improvements (11/27/12)
 - ♦ City Council approves bid for construction of Quiet Zone improvements (2/13/13)
- The Placer Herald has had eight articles regarding the Quiet Zone since December 2012.
- School education programs have been implemented for all grade schools, middle schools and high schools in Rocklin through a partnership between the Rocklin Unified School District, the City of Rocklin and Operation Lifesaver, a nonprofit dedicated to educating the public about train and railroad safety and reducing railroad-related accidents.