

SER-013-004

Strathcona County Municipal Policy Handbook

Train Whistle Cessation

Date of Approval by Council: July 17, 2012

Resolution No: 490/2012

Lead Role: Chief Commissioner

Replaces: n/a

Last Review Date: July 17, 2012

Next Review Date: 2015

Administrative Responsibility: Transportation and Agriculture Services

Special Notes:

Cross Reference: Policy SER-009-017, Traffic Control Devices that addresses installation and placement of all traffic signs, signals, and devices.

Cross Reference: Canadian Rail Operation Rules (CROR) provides the required guidelines for working with and around railroads in Canada.

Cross Reference: The Railway Safety Act and Guidelines (RSA).

Cross Reference: Transport Canada provides the required reviews and approvals for at-grade railway crossings.

Policy Statement

This policy is intended to guide the provisions on the cessation of train whistles for specific at-grade train crossings under the County's jurisdiction in order to provide a balance between federal train crossing requirements and the safe, efficient operation of the road system.

Definitions

- A. At-grade crossing: also referred to as street level crossings, is where a roadway passes across a rail company line at the same elevation. There is no difference in height between the roadway and the rail company. Vehicles are required to stop and yield to the crossing train.
- B. Benefitting Area: is the linear distance away from the train whistle source in advance of and through the specific rail crossing to an outdoor trigger criterion sound level of approximately 65 dBA up to approximately three kilometers from the train whistle source, as show in figure 1.
- C. Benefitting Population: is to be at least 50 households falling within the boundary of the benefitting area.
- D. Canadian Rail Operation Rules (CROR): is the governing document that provides operating rules for trains across Canada.
- E. The Railway Safety Act and Guidelines (RSA): governs the operation of trains across Canada.
- F. Transport Canada: the governing body that provides guidelines and procedures for transportation within Canada.

Guidelines

A. General

The principles of effective risk management, planning, and engineering will guide the required level of advanced warning required to implement whistle cessation at each at-grade train crossing.

- The safety of road users will be a primary factor in evaluating whistle cessation locations.
- The level of advance warning traffic control is directly related to the road classification, volume of vehicles, pedestrians, and rail traffic as outlined by Transport Canada.
- The whistle cessation approval decision is reviewed and controlled by Transport Canada.

Advanced warning traffic control devices for whistle cessation will be installed and reviewed against the County's Design and Construction Standards, the County's Traffic Control Devices Policy SER-009-017, the Railway Safety Act and Guidelines (RSA) in conjunction with the Canadian Rail Operating Rules (CROR), Transport Canada, as well as all applicable Provincial and Federal Acts and corresponding regulations.

All whistle cessation locations are subject to the approval of the Director of Transportation and Agriculture Services or a designate with respect to location, design, and construction standards.

A Roadside Development Permit must be obtained from Alberta Transportation for any proposed crossing alterations located within 300 meters of the provincial highway right-of-way boundary or within 800 meters of the centre point of an intersection of the provincial highway with another public road.

B. Whistle Cessation for Specific Crossings

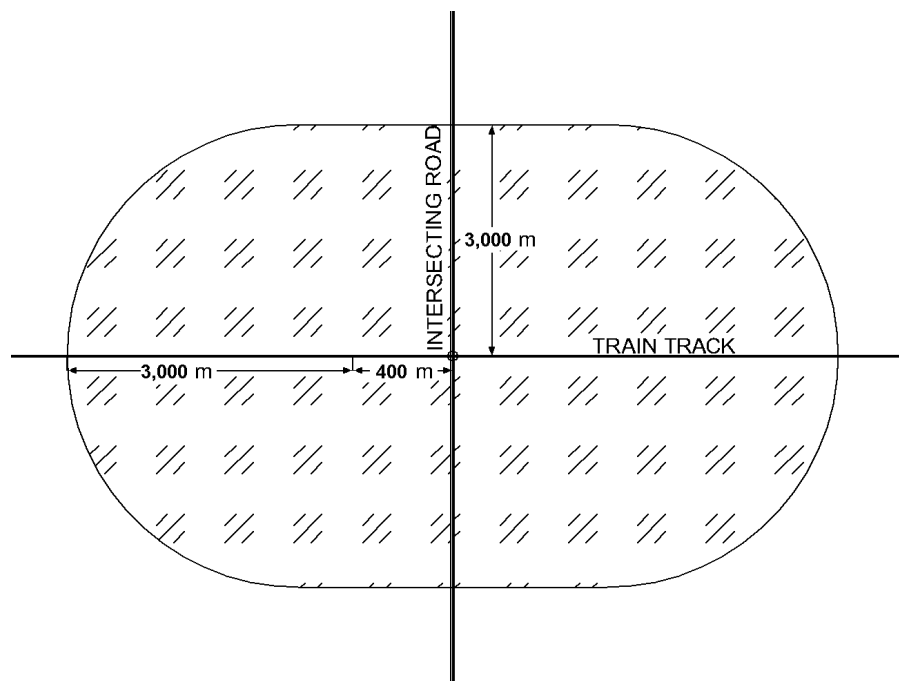


Figure 1- Train Whistle Cessation Benefiting Area (NTS)

1. For an at-grade train crossing where the benefitting area encompasses at least the required benefitting population, Council will consider, on a priority and availability-of-funds basis, the construction of such advanced warning measures defined by Transport Canada.
2. Once the minimum requirements are met, Strathcona County is to notify all relevant stakeholders of its intention to pass a Council Resolution for whistle cessation at the specific at-grade rail crossing.

Note: Once a Council resolution has been passed the train conductor retains the overruling authority to sound the whistle in the event of an imminent safety concern at his sole discretion.

Roles and Responsibilities

The role of Transportation and Agriculture Services is to:

- A. upon completion and final approval of the traffic safety upgrades required by Transport Canada, will prepare a train whistle cessation resolution for Council to review and approve at their discretion for the specific upgraded train crossing.
- B. as the road authority, when whistle cessation is approved for a rail crossing, schedule and complete intersection safety inspections as outlined by Transport Canada;

- C. service and maintain the intersection safety infrastructure as well as respond to complaints;
- D. update and upgrade the intersection safety infrastructure as outlined by Transport Canada.

The role of the rail companies is to:

- A. in the event of an emergency such as a system or power failure, follow all operating rules as set out in the CROR and RSA;
- B. abide by the train whistle cessation Council Resolution, however, retain the over riding authority to sound the train whistle at the sole discretion of the conductor as per the CROR and RSA.