



## Railroad Track Photography: the Tragic Reality

See the photos above? Smiling happy faces of youth and life. Fun in a peaceful and beautiful setting. **The reality is that four of the eight teenagers above were hit and killed by trains minutes if not seconds after these last moments were captured.**

A great photo inspires. It creates a feeling. More often than not railroad pictures create a sense of peace, calmness, or fun and adventure. **This inspires a trickle down effect.** An effect that causes new photographers, students, and shutterbugs to head out to the tracks, rail yards, and trestles (train bridges) to get that amazing shot... but these photos also give the misconception that the tracks are a safe place. So people go for walks, kids play, teenagers party. All while **somewhere on those rails there is a 6,000 ton train speeding at over 55 mph.** A train that takes over a mile to stop and can not swerve.

*"We watched in horror as we got closer," said John a railroad conductor, recalling how both he and the other conductor yelled and blew the horn as if it might stop what they knew was about to happen. "We saw them for about 12 seconds until they disappeared from our sight and the train continued moving forward."*

- Today's **Trains are faster and quieter than ever before.** You will not hear the clickity clack of older trains. In fact, coasting you may not hear them approaching at all. Most train engines make very little noise and most of the sound waves of a train go outward not forward.
- **Trains are moving faster than you think.** Because of their size they appear slower, much as a plane taking off seems to hover even though the plane is moving 150 mph. The vanishing point or one point perspective illusion that photographers love is actually a main reason you can not see how fast a train is moving.
- A freight train weighing over 6,000 tons or 12,000,000 pounds moves upwards of 55 mph and **takes over a mile (18 football fields) to stop** after the emergency brake is pulled. **This means if you see a train a mile away, it will be where you stand in about a minute...** and it can not swerve.
- A train over hangs the tracks by 3 feet on either side. Often straps and chains come loose and reach further. **You should never be closer to a track than 15 feet.**
- **No tracks should ever be assumed abandoned or inactive.** They can be used at anytime. Freight trains do not run on a set schedule, they can run on any track, any direction, at any time.

**Railroad tracks are private property and being on them is Criminal Trespassing K.S.A. 21-5809**

It is a Class A Misdemeanor that is punishable by up to a \$2,500 fine and 1 year in prison.

If a client is hurt or killed while on a shoot you could be held liable by the State, the Railroad, and your client.

I keep my  
**CLIENTS**  
off the tracks



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*As a photographer you have a passion for preserving memories and life's precious moments. We plead with you, to not let that passion be the very thing that leads to a memory being all that remains.*

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