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Stop when the railroad crossing signals flash red. That's the law.

On Feb. 21, four officers from the Burleson Police Department's traffic unit, with the assistance of the City marshal division, issued 20 citations for disregarding a railroad crossing signal at the Alsbury Boulevard crossing. The citations were issued in a timeframe of less than three hours. The detail ended when a driver struck the railroad crossing gate, damaging it.

Thursday was the first time in more than a year that the police department has partnered with Union Pacific Railroad and Special Agent Roger Rhoderick for the crossing detail. Of the 20 citations issued, 12 of the cited were men and eight were women. Additionally, four pedestrians – two men and two women – were warned, then released, after they crossed the railroad crossing at an improper place. Pedestrians can only cross railroad tracks at the actual crossing.

Seven citations were also issued for other violations, including no insurance and no driver's license.

Since May 2009, three lives have been lost in crashes involving trains at railroad crossings in Burleson. Prior to 2009, the most current train-related fatalities included two teenagers lost in two separate railroad crossing accidents in the late 1980s. The Alsbury crossing was the site of a fatal crash involving a 23-year-old Burleson man in May 2009.

In October 2012, a man was transported to the hospital with what appeared to be non-life threatening injuries after the sport utility vehicle he was driving hit a train in the 100 block of West Renfro St.

If the railroad crossing arms are down or the warning lights are flashing, drivers may not cross the railroad tracks. Drivers must stop prior to the white stop bar painted on the pavement. Be sure you can clear the tracks by at least three feet on both sides. Never stop on the tracks. Drivers must stop and wait for the gates to go up and the warning lights to stop flashing before they can safely proceed over the tracks. It usually takes a train a mile or more to come to a full stop. According to railroad crossing safety information, it is nearly impossible to accurately judge the distance and speed of an oncoming train. At crossings that have adjacent tracks (Renfro Street), a train may be approaching from the other direction, so don't cross unless both tracks are clear.