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Flashing red lights at railroad crossings are the same as a stop sign.

A dozen drivers learned that lesson Sept. 17 when the Burleson Police Department joined forces with Union Pacific Railroad and the City marshals for a railroad crossing enforcement. The focus was on four crossings – Eldred Street, Ellison Street, Renfro Street and Alsbury Boulevard. The police department's traffic unit issued 12 citations at three crossings – Ellison, Renfro and Alsbury – between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m.

Burleson Police Chief Billy Cordell was on the train. The six-member traffic unit was on the ground, watching the crossings. And two city marshals stepped in when they were needed.

Officers made 16 traffic stops (27 stops were made in March), issued 12 citations (24 in March) for disregarding a railroad crossing signal, issued three other citations (six in March) and made no arrests (one in March). The fine for disregarding a railroad crossing signal is over \$180.

Burleson Police and Union Pacific have been conducting crossing enforcement details since 2008. 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 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 on West Renfro Street.

If the railroad crossing arms are down or the warning lights are flashing, drivers must stop before reaching the white stop bar painted on the pavement. Flashing lights must be treated like a stop sign. 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. For more information, go to [www.burlesontx.com/operationlifesaver](http://www.burlesontx.com/operationlifesaver).