

Accidents at railway crossings

Reckless driving tops the list



■ by **Kishani Samaraweera**

Fines for seven traffic law violations will be increased to Rs. 25,000 following the decision made by the Transport and Civil Aviation Ministry, on November 21. Violating railway crossing rules is among the listed seven traffic rule violations.

The other violations for which a minimum of Rs. 25,000 fine will be imposed are: driving under the influence of alcohol, driving without a valid driver's licence, allowing a person who does not have a valid driver's licence to drive a vehicle, excessive speeding, overtaking from the left and driving without an insurance certificate. The government says, the sole reason for imposing such high fines is to re-establish road discipline, encourage people to follow road rules and thereby reduce the

number of accidents. According to Railway authorities when considering train accidents, due to derailment or unprotected/protected level crossings, it is important to note that such incidents can be prevented if people abide by the basic road rules.

However, there have been instances where mechanical failure has led to fatal accidents.

As per the statistics of the Department of Railways, in 2016, up to September four people have died and 18 casualties reported, of which the majority was due to negligence when using railway crossings.

Unprotected railway crossings

Operating Superintendent of Railways, Colombo Division, V.S Polwattage, speaking to *The Sunday Observer*, said, "there are no "unprotected railway crossings."

"Almost every level crossing is protected and in addition, the Railway Department has put up sign boards and warnings on railway platforms

and at level crossings, indicating that the public should be careful when getting across these level crossings," he added.

Incidents, deaths and casualties reported from January - Sept. 2016

	Crossings	Bamboo	Gates	Incidents
January	05	01	06	00/00
February	04	00	04	00/04
March	02	02	04	00/01
April	09	01	10	01/07
May	05	00	05	01/02
June	11	01	12	00/00
July	10	02	12	02/01
August	08	03	11	00/03
September	03	02	05	00/00

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