

SAFETY CORNER

By Jim McKeel, Director NARCOA Area 9

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On a recent excursion, a safety problem came up which we had not previously experienced. No fewer than four wooden road crossing planks were encountered, which protruded above the height of the head of the rail. (Or perhaps the rail had dropped below the surface of the crossing planks). This was very nearly a critical condition, especially for the M9s that have smaller wheels and ride more closely to the head of the rail.

The frames of these motorcars and/or the bolts securing the axles to the frames scraped on the wooden crossing planks. Had one of these crossing planks been situated so that its blunt end protruded just slightly higher, a motorcar approaching with the operator unaware of the problem could have been brought to a very sudden stop, and the car might have flipped over forward.

Therefore, when approaching a crossing and first making sure no highway traffic is approaching, and checking the flangeways to see that they are clear, also remember to take a quick look at the crossing planks to ensure they are not protruding too high above the head of the rail. If the planks seem too high, approach the crossing very slowly to determine that the motorcar will clear, or stop the motorcar and walk it across the crossing.

Remember, as always, safety is the primary factor. Do not take any chances. Always take the safe course. Always keep a close watch on the track ahead for hazardous conditions and respond appropriately in time to avoid a problem.
