

PRAGUE, 6 June 2019

Accidents at Railway Crossings Do Not Decline

Every year, more than 150 collisions occur at level crossings on the Czech railway. Správa železniční dopravní cesty (SŽDC) invests hundreds of millions of Czech crowns into higher safeguarding of level crossings. Nevertheless, dozens of people die there every year, many others suffer injuries. Tragic consequences were shown today during a simulated collision of a train with a van which was prepared by SŽDC within the International Level Crossing Awareness Day ILCAD 2019.

Culprits of accidents at railway crossings include also professional car drivers. Therefore, the motto of ILCAD this year is "The most important stop of my professional life". Within the premises of Odstavné nádraží jih (Storage Yard South) in Prague Michle Quarter, a situation was demonstrated when a professional car driver did not respect a warning signal at a railway crossing which resulted in a collision with a regular train. The driver and the co-driver were injured, one seriously and one slightly.

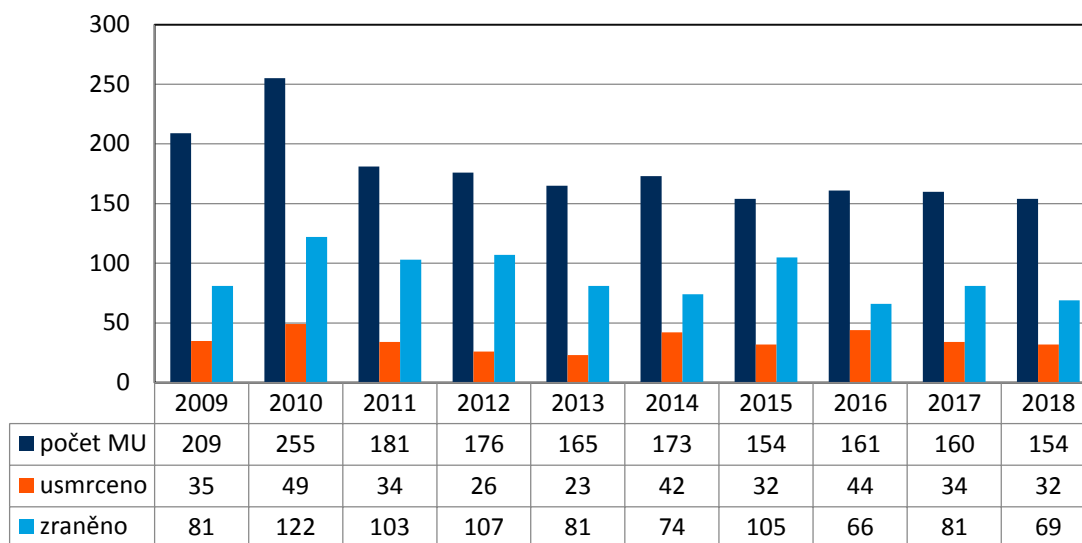
An intervention of SŽDC Fire Service employees followed. During the collision, the road car was heavily damaged so that its passengers had to be extricated from the car by use of special technology. However, one of them succumbed to his injuries before the rescue service was able to arrive.

Such events (or similar ones) occur on the Czech railway in average every two days. Only last year, SŽDC registered 154 collisions at crossings with 32 casualties and 69 wounded. Statistics from the first five months of this year are not better; up to the end of May, 72 collisions occurred with 11 casualties and 25 wounded.

"Although we spend hundreds of millions of crowns to safeguard railway crossings, the number of collisions with trains does not decline. The culprits are drivers who do not observe clearly set rules, thus taking hazards not only with their own lives but also with lives of their co-drivers. Moreover, such irresponsible behaviour endangers lives of passengers in trains as well", says Mr. Jiří Svoboda, Director General of SŽDC.

This year, SŽDC will improve safeguarding at dozens of level crossings of roads with railway lines in our country. This will occur not only by means of investments focused directly on railway crossings but also within modernization of lines. Most often, signalling equipment is being installed on sites where only St. Andrew's crosses were situated up to now; alternatively, light and sound signals are being completed by barriers. Besides that, the infrastructure manager closes crossings being used only scarcely; on the contrary, SŽDC prepares construction of grade-separated crossings for the most frequently used ones.

The table shows a comparison of collisions at railway crossings during the last 10 years:



Počet MU – number of exceptional events

Usmrceno – Killed

Zraněno – Wounded

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