



For Immediate Release
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SMART systemwide testing underway

In preparation for the start of passenger service, Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART) has ramped up its systemwide testing from northern Santa Rosa to downtown San Rafael. SMART's testing includes running trains, operating railroad crossing gates, and testing train control and communications systems.

SMART's public outreach team is canvassing communities, and working with schools and businesses to provide information, and to reinforce the district's safety message.

"Safety is a top priority at SMART," said SMART General Manager Farhad Mansourian. "We want to thank people for their patience and ask that they drive carefully near our railroad crossings at all times, regardless of whether they see a train or not. We also want to remind people that walking on SMART's railroad tracks is dangerous, and illegal."

SMART is testing its fleet of rail cars at various speeds to ensure that they are functioning safely and properly. Federal regulations require trains use their safety horns when approaching crossings and anytime train operators see a safety hazard on or near the railroad tracks.

SMART is also testing all of its crossing gates. Bells will sound, lights will flash and the crossing gates will periodically come down. Crossing gates are being tested both with and without trains. Motorists should always be prepared to stop at crossing gates and must wait until the warning signals stop and the gates are raised completely before proceeding.

In addition, SMART is testing its computerized signal systems, which enable crossing gates and trains to function safely and efficiently, as well as its train control and communications systems.

"Testing the system now is essential to providing our passengers with a safe, reliable transportation service once operations begin later this year," Mansourian said. "Ensuring all of our trains, crossing gates and communications systems are functioning properly will allow us to deliver on that promise."

SMART issued several safety tips, including:

- Be prepared to stop at all railroad crossings, even if no train is visible. SMART is testing crossing gates both with and without trains. Slow down, look both ways, and listen for warning signals.
- When driving, never try to race a train through the crossing gates, and never stop on the tracks.
- Never walk on the railroad tracks or use the tracks as a path of travel. Walking on the tracks is dangerous, and illegal.
- For railroad emergencies or if the crossing gates are not functioning properly contact SMART at 1-888-412-3330.

For information on SMART's testing visit www.SonomaMarinTrain.org or call (707) 794-3330.

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