

OP MINUTE

BETWEEN THE RAILS



On August 6, a conductor trainee was fatally injured during a shoving movement at a rail yard. The conductor was riding the end of the leading intermodal car controlling the yard shoving move and a conductor trainee (CT) was riding the leading end of the second car moving eastward at approximately 9 mph. The move consisted of two locomotives and nine loaded intermodal well cars. Both employees were riding on the same side of the cars. The leading end of the movement traversed a slight curve and approached a set of three parked locomotives on the adjacent track to their right. The conductor continued the shove movement even though the track centers were becoming increasingly narrow. The conductor's stature allowed him to position himself to pass the locomotives. However, the CT was not able to pass the locomotives and received fatal crushing injuries between the car he was riding and the parked locomotives. Visibility conditions at the time of the accident were dark and clear, and the temperature was 73° F.

Take Aways

- Remain vigilant of your surroundings as well as mentoring inexperienced employees.
- Safety is paramount in performing duties. When side clearances are close, ensure the movement is safe to ride.
- Employees should only ride equipment when necessary for job duties, and only after the process for doing so is discussed in a job briefing.
- A qualified employee must monitor a trainees performance and be in a position to take action as necessary.

The Five Lifesavers

- Secure equipment before action is taken
- Protect employees against moving equipment
- Discuss safety at the beginning of a job or when a project changes
- Communicate before action is taken
- Mentor less experienced employees to perform services safely.

Most Common Findings in Switching Operations Fatalities

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|------------------------------|-----|
| Close Clearance/No Clearance | 25% |
| Inexperienced Employee | 22% |
| Industry Hazard | 21% |
| Inadequate Job Briefing | 20% |
| Struck by Mainline Train | 17% |

FRA Goals for 2023

FRA is aiming to reduce employee on-duty fatalities by 25% for the year 2023.