

SAFETY BULLETIN

2023-07

SUBJECT: Employee Fatality – Crossing Tracks

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is investigating an accident that occurred on September 17, 2023, in which a railroad employee, with 19 years of experience, was killed. The car department employee was working in a railroad yard at night and parked his work truck approximately 15 feet away from an active remote control zone switching lead. After exiting the truck, the employee walked perpendicular to the switching lead and stepped into the path of a two-unit remote control locomotive (RCL) consist. The RCL consist struck and killed the employee. The RCL was moving at or about 10 mph, with the headlights illuminated and two warning strobe lights activated. The operator controlling the RCL movement was positioned on the rear unit of the consist and did not see the employee approach the lead track. At the time of the accident, the fatally injured employee had been in the process of applying blue signal protection to yard tracks near the track on which the RCL was operating.

The purpose of this Safety Bulletin, which is informal in nature, is to ensure the railroad industry is aware of this recent accident. Although FRA's investigation into this accident is ongoing, FRA reminds all railroads and railroad employees of the importance of maintaining constant situational awareness when approaching or fouling railroad tracks and the importance of:

1. Being alert to train movements at all times and always expecting the movement of trains, engines, cars, or other movable equipment at any time, on any track, and in either direction.
2. Stopping and looking in both directions before fouling or crossing a track or set of tracks.

FRA requests that railroads review this Safety Bulletin with all employees. As FRA completes its investigation, it may take additional actions with respect to this accident.

FRA also reminds railroads of the recommendations made in FRA Safety Advisory 2010-03, titled "Notice of Safety Advisory: Staying Alert and Situational Awareness."

FRA Safety Advisory 2010-03 is available on FRA's website at <https://railroads.dot.gov/regulations/federal-register-documents/2010-26089>.

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