

## SAFETY ISSUES:

Many occupational hazards exist for roadway workers on or about railroad tracks. Even though there have been significant reductions in fatalities over the years, accidental deaths still occur. Most of the recent incidents could have been avoided if situational awareness was improved and good communication practices were utilized. FRA issued Roadway Worker Protection Life Tips following an increase in roadway worker protection fatalities during 2003. FRA strongly believes that in light of recent events, these safety tips should be reissued and given new attention and emphasis.

1. A current copy of the railroad's on-track safety rules must be readily available.
2. Never foul a track unless it's necessary in the performance of duty. In other words, do not walk or stand in the fouling space to conduct work unless you are absolutely certain that on-track safety has been positively established.
3. You have the right to challenge the on-track safety procedures applied at the job location if you believe that they do not comply with the rules of the railroad. All workers should remain clear of the track until the challenge is resolved.
4. An on-track safety job briefing must be conducted before fouling the track, and you should understand all aspects of your on-track safety to ensure that you are adequately protected. The on-track safety briefing must be appropriate for the work that you are about to perform and you must acknowledge that you understand the briefing.
5. Remind the person providing you the on-track safety job briefing that you must be notified of any changes in the on-track safety procedures or conditions that may occur throughout the day.
6. You must know the identity of the worker who is in charge of the on-track safety procedures.
7. It is critical to know the type of on-track safety for the track(s) you are to foul.
8. The specific working limits must be clearly defined. Otherwise, train approach warning must be provided and, when clearing the track, the designated place of safety must be known by all in the work group. It is imperative that you are clear of the track before any train is no less than 15 seconds from your work location.
9. If the work activity is likely to foul adjacent track(s) or it is large scale, you must know what type of on-track safety is provided on those adjacent track(s).

10. If you are a lone worker using individual train detection:
  - The on-track safety statement must be completed.
  - You have the right to use an alternate form of on-track safety other than individual train detection.
  - You cannot be working where there is noise (e.g., environmental, power tools, machines, etc.), other impediments, or impairments interfering with your ability to detect approaching trains.
  - You must be outside a manual interlocking, controlled point, or remote hump yard facility.
  - You must have the ability to clear to a protected area.
  - The required sight distance must be available in order for you to be in the clear before any train is not less than 15 seconds away from your work location.
  - Only minor repairs, inspections, or correction work may be performed, as long as they do not interfere with your ability to detect approaching trains.
11. If the task involves Roadway Maintenance Machine (RMM), you must know the RMM procedures to ensure your safety.
12. The required on-track safety training and/or qualification must be completed before you perform your duties.
13. If required, railroad communication (e.g., radio) must be available.
14. Stop, look, and listen before crossing any track, regardless of the on-track safety status of the track(s).

Expect the movement of trains, engines, cars, or other moveable equipment at any time, on any track, from either direction.

All of us can benefit greatly by following these FRA life tips and learning from the incidents listed above. We are all responsible for our own safety.

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## ROADWAY WORKER PROTECTION



## FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION

### FRA CONTINUES TO PROMOTE SAFE WORKPLACE PRACTICES

Since the implementation of the Roadway Worker Protection (RWP) regulation in 1997, the railroad industry has had 41 roadway worker fatalities. In the 12-month period between February 2008 and February 2009, 11 roadway workers were fatally injured while on duty. These fatalities are a grave reminder that all railway workers must adhere to all safety rules at all times and be focused while on or about railroad tracks. The environment can change rapidly on the railroad. Roadway workers must be focused to recognize those changes and adapt on-track protection as necessary. FRA encourages you to be vigilant to stop this tragic trend.

## TRAIN APPROACH WARNING

As train density increases, it becomes more difficult for roadway workers to get exclusive track occupancy. Train approach warning is a form of on-track protection that can be used to perform “minor” work that does not require time from a dispatcher. However, there have been far too many incidents that have resulted in fatalities when train approach warning was used improperly. It is necessary to discuss some of the critical points of train approach warning.

- Train approach warning must be given to all affected employees allowing them to move to a predetermined place of safety at least 15 seconds before a train passes their location.
- The designated employee providing train approach warning must dedicate full attention to the approach of trains and not be assigned any other duties.
- The means of communicating the warning must be distinct and clear and not require an employee to be looking in any particular direction.
- All employees that depend on train approach warning must remain in a position to receive notification of the approach of a train.
- The designated person to provide train approach warning must be properly trained and qualified.
- Every watchman/lookout must be properly equipped by the employer with the equipment necessary to provide a proper notification.

One of the most important aspects of train approach warning is the requirement to have adequate sight distance. There are minimum requirements; however, employees should add additional sight distance as the job task requires. The watchman/lookout must add sight distance as the time it takes for an employee to move to a place of safety increases. Another important point is the notification of the approach of a train. A notification must be clear and distinct. Based on training and experience, employees must determine the appropriate type of notification. For example, if noise is a factor, such as working with power tools, a whistle or air horn may be appropriate for conveying audible warning; but in certain circumstances train approach warning would not be a proper form of on-track protection. Employers are required to provide employees with the necessary equipment to properly notify all affected employees. If a watchman/lookout is not equipped to provide train approach warning effectively, the watchman or the employees being protected can use a good faith challenge to discuss with their employer.

When using train approach warning, all employees must ensure that sight distance and the type of notification prescribed in the job briefing are adequate for the task at hand, and again, if the environment or situation changes. It is crucial to use this type of on-track safety properly as it is often the only means of protecting workers on live track.

## Injuries and Fatalities:

### • **January 23, 2009 - Arizona**

A roadway work group was working in a curve driving down high spikes using train approach warning as on-track protection. A train approached on the adjacent track and stopped next to the work gang. The train's presence reduced sight distance to a level less than required by Federal regulations. Shortly after, a freight train entered the work area on the occupied track, striking one employee.

### • **January 9, 2009 - New York**

A two-person signal roadway work group was working at an interlocking lubricating switches using train approach warning as on-track protection. One member went to get more material and the other fouled the track without protection and was struck by a passenger train.

### • **December 9, 2008 - Missouri**

A signal maintainer was in an interlocking apparently working on a switch heater. The employee was struck by a freight train and later died as a result of the injuries. It appears that no on-track protection was being used at the time of the incident.