



Inside THE RAIL

From NASA's Confidential Close Call Reporting System

ISSUE 25

AUGUST 2024

JOB SAFETY BRIEFINGS



At the beginning of every task, most railroads require crews to conduct a Job Safety Briefing. Employees state that they sometimes feel that Job Safety Briefings are unnecessary and a waste of time because many of the things they talk about are obvious to everyone on the crew. However, on railroad crews, in every craft, each employee is performing different functions to complete a task and therefore the Job Safety Briefing informs each employee of the overall goal of the crew, their task, what protection is provided and by whom, and of any known hazards. Just as important, if the task changes, another

Job Safety Briefing is required to accomplish the same goals and to assure every employee involved is aware of the change and their revised duties. Job Safety Briefings are also a good opportunity to discuss new rules, revised rules, and procedures.

In this edition, we present some C³RS incidents that demonstrate the importance of a proper Job Safety Briefing.

I Can't Hear You!

During a Job Safety Briefing, one of the topics crucial to completing a train shoving movement is to discuss what form of communication will be used to control and stop the movement. In this report, an Engineer reported that the method used for communication failed and an additional briefing did not occur when the communication method changed.

■ *While making a reverse move from Yard X into Track X at Station X. The Conductor pulled the emergency brake valve to control the movement as we approached the bumper block at the west end of Track X. Our mode of communication was via train radio, as the Public Address system was not working as intended, and the Conductor could not clearly hear my end of the conversation. When we left Yard Y, the communicating buzzer was not [at] the volume and intensity that I was used to. I believed, at the time, I could work with it. The Conductor communicated to me clearly the signals and physical characteristics encountered and counted down car lengths to the block. We made a two-car safety stop and then proceeded at no more than X MPH. At his count of a quarter of a car, I ensured the train was at less than Y MPH and was prepared to stop. I only heard one buzz, which I presumed was the first one of on the caution; the second one would have been to stop. The train went into emergency suddenly, which was from the Conductor pulling the emergency brake cord. When the train came to a halt, the notched prong of the coupler was a few inches into the hole within the bumper block, but the body of the coupler did not contact the block. I asked my Conductor to notify Supervision at [the] Local Dispatchers Office via his work phone, and they advised us not to worry about it. I believe the cause of this incident was primarily due to the low volume of the buzzer in my cab. Had*

the buzzer been able to overcome the ambient noise of the train, HVAC noise, etc., I would have stopped the train on my own rather than my Conductor pulling the cord.

C³RS Expert Analyst's Callback Summary:

The reporter, an Engineer, stated that after the Public Address (PA) system was recognized as not functioning correctly, a second Job Safety Briefing was not conducted. The Engineer thought that the PA volume would be sufficient. The Engineer did not hear the second buzzer from the Conductor. The Engineer said that the radio should have been used when the PA was not working correctly. Moving forward, the Engineer stated that the radio would be used when there are issues with the PA. The malfunctioning PA was reported to the Mechanical Department. When asked if there was a loss of situational awareness or being time pressured, the Engineer said no.

Briefings Require Action

Derails are used on tracks to cause rolling equipment to derail rather than roll out and foul the Main Track or lead. During their Job Safety Briefing, the Crew in this incident discussed the presence of a derail on the track they were shoving but did not remove it.

■ *We were spotting seven cars in the industry. Before entering the industry, I was on the point of the train shoving. When I realized that the derail still applied, we tried to stop the train, but we ran over it with a set of wheels. No damage was done, and no cars derailed. As I inspected the derail, it was rusted, faded, and the same color as the rail which caused me not to see that the derail was up. Once again, no damage was done to the derail, or the rail car.*

C³RS Expert Analyst's Callback Summary:

The reporter, a Brakeman, stated that they hadn't serviced this particular industry in quite some time. The Brakeman did have a Job Safety Briefing with the Engineer prior to shoving down to the industry. The crew knew there was a derail located somewhere on the track that would probably need to be removed. The Brakeman, while riding the last car, saw that the gates were opened to the industry and did not see a derail. The Conductor told the Engineer to keep coming, the gates were open, and the derail was down. The Engineer acknowledged. A few car lengths later, the Brakeman realized the derail was not off and in fact it was still applied. The Brakeman immediately radioed the Engineer to stop the train. The Engineer stopped, although the rear car had run over the derail but did not derail. The Brakeman looked at the car and the derail. There was no damage done to either. The Brakeman removed the derail and completed the move. The Brakeman will walk down the track to locate the derail in the future to assure that it is off. The Brakeman also reiterated that the derail should be painted so it is more visible.

Operational Changes Require Additional Briefing

This Crew conducted a Job Safety Briefing at the beginning of their trip, but several operational items changed during their trip and communication broke down.

■ *Prior to arriving at Station X on Train A, we were given an addition to our Track Bulletins at Station Y. The addition was a Crossing Warning Malfunction Notification. We did observe the Crossing Warning Malfunction Notification, and there were Signal Maintainers on site ... After arriving at Station X, I called to verify my Track Bulletins with the Dispatcher for the return trip, and he stated it was as printed... On our return trip at approximately Milepost (MP) X, I had gotten a phone call from the Dispatcher stating a passenger had called and they were locked in a bathroom. By the time I had gotten off the phone, I realized I had forgotten to remind my Engineer about the Crossing Warning Malfunction Notification. I quickly reminded him, and by that point, we had already gone past it. The Positive Train Control did not put him into a penalty or even slow him down... Further investigation showed it was repaired at approximately XA:30 AM. When I called to verify my Track Bulletins, they had forgotten to void it from my Track Bulletins...*

C³RS Expert Analyst's Callback Summary:

The reporter, a Conductor, stated that in the Job Safety Briefing for the return trip, the Crossing Warning Malfunction Notification was discussed with the Engineer. The Conductor

was unsure why the Engineer did not observe the Crossing Warning Malfunction Notification. It was later determined by the Conductor that the Dispatcher did not update the Track Bulletins reflecting that the Crossing Warning Malfunction Notification had been removed.

Some Things Never Change

In this incident, Maintenance of Way employees conducted a Job Safety Briefing with the Employee in Charge several hours before lunch during which a misaligned switch was discussed. After lunch another Job Safety Briefing was conducted but the misaligned switch was not discussed.

■ *I and four other employees were loading spikes into a spiking machine. After we finished our work, we job briefed with our Employee in Charge and were directed to remove our protection (one derail to our north and a switch lined against us to our south)... In our Job Safety Briefing, we had not been re-informed of the misaligned switch. I began proceeding south and was not paying attention, going through the switch while it was still misaligned...*

C³RS Expert Analyst's Callback Summary:

The reporter, a Machine Operator, stated that there was a Job Safety Briefing (JSB) before lunch and that the position of switches was discussed... Several hours after lunch, there was another JSB; however, the position of the switches was not discussed at this JSB. The reporter further explained ... forgot about a switch which was lined and locked against the Crew for their protection while working. The reporter noted... there were no trains in the area at the time of the incident.

Did You Know?



MOBILE FRIENDLY REPORTING

NASA C³RS has mobile friendly report forms so you can submit your report on your mobile device! Also, when you submit a C³RS report, a NASA C³RS Expert Analyst may call you to get more information or to better understand the safety issues you are sharing. It is very important that you return our call as soon as possible so that your identification (ID) strip (sent by the U.S. Mail) can be returned to you quickly.

The incoming call on your phone will not say NASA but will be from [area code 650](#). Remember, the more information you include in your report, the faster the ID strip can be returned to you!

Report Intake By Craft January through June 2024	
Transportation	1,756
Engineering	74
Mechanical	70

C³RS
Inside The Rail
Issue 25 – August 2024
<https://c3rs.arc.nasa.gov>

Monthly Report Intake Previous 3 Months	
April	384
May	356
June	276