

GLOBAL SAFETY ALERT

EMPLOYEE FATALLY INJURED ON RAIL TRACKS

INCIDENT DETAILS

An employee was tidying the area and cutting grass on and around the rail tracks at a cement plant. During his work, he positioned himself about 100 meters from 8 parked carts, facing away from them. A locomotive at the other end arrived with another 12 carts, which coupled those that were parked and began to move them. The last cart of that convoy of 20 then struck our employee from behind.



The employee's position when he was struck by the rail cart.

KEY FINDINGS

- Work had begun without first blocking the mechanism of the track to prevent the locomotive from entering that track and moving the rail carts.
- The employee had been assigned to clean a section of the rail track that would be free of rail cart movement, but he started cleaning an adjacent track where rail carts could move.
- The 'switchman' (guide) was responsible for checking the rear of the rail carts before they were moved, but he did not.
- The locomotive operator did not sound the whistle before starting to move the rail carts.
- The shift leader assigned the task without requesting the work permit and ensuring the safety conditions of the work area.
- There were no appropriate warning signs or a control process to alert people of a high-risk work area and to prohibit access.

MANAGERS – KEY POINTS TO CHECK

- All workers operating on railway tracks know the procedure to block the track when they perform work on it.
- All workers responsible for moving rail carts are aware of and understand the safety procedures for the activity.
- There is effective supervision in place, especially for high-risk tasks, and the correct procedures are strictly enforced.
- Permit to Work requirements are clearly defined and all supervisors and workers know their responsibilities.
- There are effective signs, signals and equipment to block the rail tracks and to alert others when work is being performed on them and when access is prohibited (e.g., 'red zones').

ALL PERSONNEL – ACTION TO TAKE

- Never place yourself in the 'line of fire'. When performing work on the rail tracks, always apply the rail track blocking procedure. Stay clear of any demarcated and prohibited areas (e.g., 'red zones').
- Don't deviate from the assigned work area unless your supervisor has agreed and always double check the new area of work is also blocked to prevent rail cart movement.
- Before working on rail activities, review whether you have had the safety training for the tasks you need to do. If in doubt, speak to your supervisor.
- Check with your supervisor to see if you need a Permit to Work for your task.
- If you have notice there are no restrictions and prohibitions in place to prevent people being in the vicinity of moving rail carts, report it to your supervisor.



Isolation
Procedures



Safe
Systems



Tools /
Equipment



Look After Yourself
and Each Other