

Employee Seriously Injured on the Northwest Division

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Oct. 21, 2022

On Oct. 19, a BNSF employee was seriously injured while conducting switching operations in Vancouver Yard (Northwest Division) in Vancouver, WA., sustaining an amputation injury.

Please take time to engage with your teams in a Job Safety Briefing (JSB) about this incident and discuss preventive measures to minimize this risk.

While the investigation is still ongoing, this is the preliminary information we know:

At approximately 2:49 p.m. Pacific Time (PT) a crew was in the process of gathering cars on the north end of yard track 7 in Vancouver, WA. Although both crews that were working on opposite ends in the same track had been communicating with each other concerning the moves they were making during the shift, the helper on the north lead job was in between a standing cut of cars while additional cars that were previously kicked into track 7 from the south end made contact with the cars that he was working on.

As we continue to investigate the circumstances that led to this incident, we want to take the opportunity to review several critical factors to help ensure all movements are completed safely.

Risk Mitigation

We work in a safe but unforgiving environment with the potential for incidents that could have life-altering or fatal results. **Always remember that no task we have in front of us is more important than your safety and the safety of your co-workers.**

Ask yourself the following questions when going between equipment.

- Did I complete a thorough Job Safety Briefing (JSB) before beginning this task?
- What do I need to do before going between or beginning work on the end of rail equipment on any track?
- Have I waited until all movement has stopped before going between or beginning work on the end of rail equipment on any track?
- Have I ensured that all crew members—including myself, as well as other crews working in the same tracks—have a clear understanding of the work to be performed?
- Have I identified myself when using a radio before going between or beginning work on the end of rail equipment on any track?
- Am I making sure to not go between uncoupled locomotives or cars when clearance between them is less than 50 feet except when permitted by rule?
- **Am I expecting the movement of trains, locomotives, cars or other equipment at any time, on any track and in either direction?**

S-13.1.1 Going Between Cars or Locomotives (*in part*)

Where engines may be working at both ends of a track or tracks, crews switching must have a clear understanding of movements to be made.