



# **PRELIMINARY REPORT**

## **RAILROAD**

### **Union Pacific Railroad Contractor Employee Fatality**

**Castroville, Texas**  
**September 22, 2021**  
**RRD21LR016**

*The information in this report is preliminary and will be either supplemented or corrected during the course of the investigation.*

On September 22, 2021, about 2:40 p.m. local time an employee for W.T. Byler Company (WT Byler) performing bridge work for the Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP) was struck and fatally injured by a suspended load consisting of steel grating he was moving with a roadway maintenance machine (crane) near Castroville, Texas. The employee was moving the steel grating westward from an open deck bridge at milepost 240.37 to a materials staging area located at milepost 240.74 on UP's single main track with a rail-bound mini-excavator attached with a crane/boom. (See figure.) The accident occurred at milepost 240.65 located on UP's Del Rio Subdivision. No other employees were near the track area, and no other employees witnessed the accident.



**Figure.** Photo of the roadway maintenance machine equipped with a boom.

The Del Rio Subdivision is part of UP's South Texas service unit, and operates between Control Point Kirby and Control Point Spofford. The employee was performing work under track and time authority between East Siding Switch Newman and West Siding Switch La Coste. The weather at the time of the accident was 87°F and partly cloudy.

Preliminary information indicates the employee was operating the roadway maintenance machine westward, with 3 spans of steel grating measuring approximately 20 feet long by 3 feet wide, and weighing about 2,200 pounds. The foreman in charge of the work gang made several attempts to contact the employee by radio. After about 5 minutes with no response, the foreman walked to the location where the employee was operating. The employee was found unresponsive still seated in the equipment. The foreman immediately called 911, and emergency personal arrived on-scene at about 3:00 p.m.

While on-scene, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) conducted track inspections, inspected and measured the steel grating material, collected accident documentation from UP and WT Byler, and conducted interviews. The NTSB investigation is ongoing. Future investigative activity will focus on UP and WT Byler railroad rules and operations when handling material with rail-mounted equipment.

Parties to this NTSB investigation include the Federal Railroad Administration, UP, and WT Byler.