



Approved: July 12, 2023

Preliminary Report RRD23FR012

*This information is preliminary and subject to change.*

# CSX Transportation Conductor Trainee

## Fatality

Baltimore, Maryland

June 26, 2023

On June 26, 2023, about 8:05 p.m. local time, a CSX Transportation (CSX) conductor trainee on CSX yard job Y231 was killed while riding the lead railcar during a shoving movement at Seagirt Marine Terminal in Baltimore, Maryland.<sup>1</sup> (See figure 1.) The conductor trainee fell from an intermodal railcar during the movement and was struck by the train.<sup>2</sup> Visibility conditions at the time of the accident were daylight and clear; the weather was 84°F with intermittent rain showers earlier that day.

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<sup>1</sup> (a) A *shoving movement* is the process of pushing railcars or a train from the rear with a locomotive. (b) Seagirt Marine Terminal in Baltimore is managed by Ports America. The track is owned and inspected by Canton Railroad.

<sup>2</sup> An *intermodal railcar* is designed to carry shipping containers used in intermodal freight transportation. The intermodal railcars in this accident were each made up of three to five connected single-unit railcars; all railcars in the accident train were empty.



**Figure 1.** Illustrated aerial view of accident scene. (Source: Google Earth.)

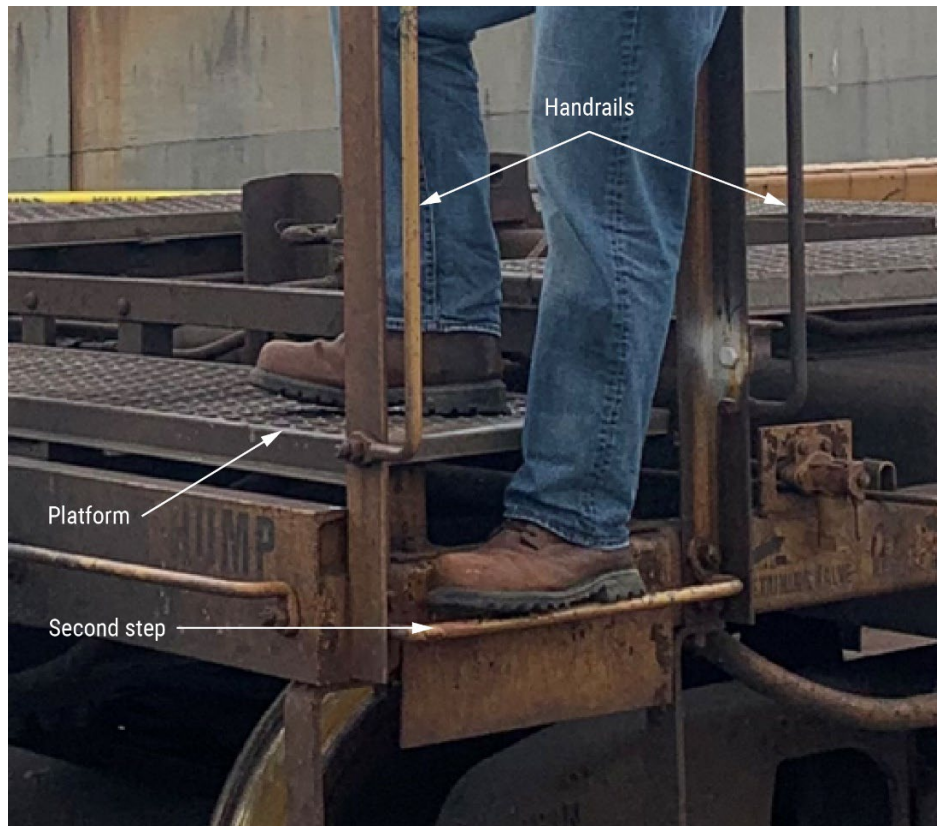
The crew of yard job Y231 consisted of an engineer in the locomotive cab, a conductor, and the conductor trainee. The train was composed of 2 locomotives and 15 empty intermodal railcars. Seagirt Marine Terminal surveillance camera data reviewed by National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigators showed that the crew was in the process of shoving the railcars around a curve, with the conductor and conductor trainee protecting the shoving movement.<sup>3</sup> The conductor was on the west side of the lead railcar (the right side in the direction of travel). The conductor trainee was controlling the shoving movement from the east side of the lead railcar (the left side in the direction of travel) with one foot on the second step of the railcar and one foot on the platform.<sup>4</sup> (See figure 2.) The conductor trainee communicated instructions using his handheld radio that they needed to stop within 5 railcar lengths.<sup>5</sup> As the train slowed, the conductor trainee fell from his position and was struck by the train.

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<sup>3</sup> A crew member protects a shoving movement by visually determining that the route is clear of obstructions and conflicting movements.

<sup>4</sup> A crew member controls a shoving movement by giving instructions to the engineer.

<sup>5</sup> Crews commonly use railcar lengths to communicate distances.



**Figure 2.** Photo of investigator on the intermodal railcar during reenactment of the accident.

While on scene, NTSB investigators reviewed data from surveillance cameras, the locomotive event recorder, and the forward-facing image recorder of the lead locomotive; conducted a static reenactment of the accident to understand the position of the conductor trainee on the intermodal railcar and a dynamic reenactment of the movement of the equipment involved in the accident; and completed interviews.

As a result of this accident, on July 6, 2023, the Federal Railroad Administration issued "Safety Bulletin 2023-04: Trainee Switching Fatality Involving a Shove Movement in a Yard," advising railroads and employees to review applicable training and follow safety procedures for riding equipment.<sup>6</sup> On July 1, 2023, the Switching Operations Fatalities Analysis Working Group issued an alert, advising employees to

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<sup>6</sup> The full text of the Safety Bulletin is accessible at: <https://railroads.dot.gov/sites/fra.dot.gov/files/2023-07/Safety-Bulletin-2023-04-Riding-Equipment-Fatality-final-070623.pdf>.

remain vigilant during switching operations and to conduct job briefings whenever a job changes.<sup>7</sup>

The NTSB's investigation is ongoing. Future investigative activity will focus on the industry-wide operational rules and training for conductors riding equipment, and the design and riding configuration of the railcar involved in this accident.

Parties to the investigation include the Federal Railroad Administration; CSX; the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen; and the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers.

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<sup>7</sup> The full text of the SOFA Alert is accessible at: <https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/sofa-alert-july-1-2023>.