



Issued: February 9, 2022

NTSB No. RRD22LR003

*This is preliminary information, subject to change, and may contain errors. Any errors in this report will be corrected when the final report has been completed.*

# Railroad Worker Fatality

Reed, PA

December 8, 2021

On December 8, 2021, about 11:20 a.m. local time, an employee for National Salvage and Service Corporation assigned to work with a Norfolk Southern Corporation (NS) work gang replacing track was killed when the operator of a spike machine reversed direction and struck the employee in Reed, Pennsylvania. In the moments before the accident, three NS spike machines were being operated from north to south on the NS main track Buffalo line at milepost BR 295.1.<sup>1</sup> The employee was marking rail to be removed and collected by the NS work gang when he was struck. ([See figure.](#)) The weather was clear with no precipitation.

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<sup>1</sup> A *spike machine* is a mechanized machine equipped to pound spikes into tie plates or pull them away.



**Figure.** Photo of strike machine involved in the accident.

Preliminary information indicates that the employee was standing in the gage (distance between the rails) of the track at the time he was struck. The operator of the striking spike machine informed the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigators during interviews that he did not see the employee behind the spike machine before initiating the reverse movement or during the reverse movement.

While on scene, NTSB investigators examined the accident location, conducted noise level testing of the environment and the equipment with the help of the local Occupational Safety and Health Administration office, conducted sight-distance testing, tested equipment with a representative from the manufacturer, and conducted interviews. The NTSB's investigation is ongoing. Future investigative activity will focus on equipment, training requirements, railroad worker safety, and regulatory compliance.

Parties to the investigation include the Federal Railroad Administration, NS, National Salvage and Service Corporation, Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes, and Nordco Incorporated.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Brotherhood of Maintenance-of-Way Employes Division spells the word "Employes" in its name with one e. Therefore, we are using that spelling in this report.