



Approved: September 29, 2023

Preliminary Report RRD23FR017

This information is preliminary and subject to change.

CSX Transportation Employee Fatality

Walbridge, Ohio

September 17, 2023

On September 17, 2023, about 3:24 a.m. local time, a member of a CSX Transportation (CSX) mechanical department crew (the accident carman) was struck and killed by a pair of CSX-owned remote control locomotives on the Walbridge Yard lead track in Walbridge, Ohio.¹ At the time of the accident, the accident carman was walking from a parked truck across multiple tracks to line and lock a switch to prepare for railcar inspections.² As he began crossing the lead track to access the switch, he was struck by the locomotives, which were traveling south about 10 mph. (See figure.) Visibility conditions at the time of the accident were dark and clear, but the area was illuminated with overhead lighting. The weather was 63°F with no precipitation.

¹ A lead track connects yard tracks.

² Carmen *line* switches to direct train traffic away from track where they plan to inspect railcars; this prevents trains from entering that track. *Locking* a switch prevents unauthorized personnel from lining it in a different direction.

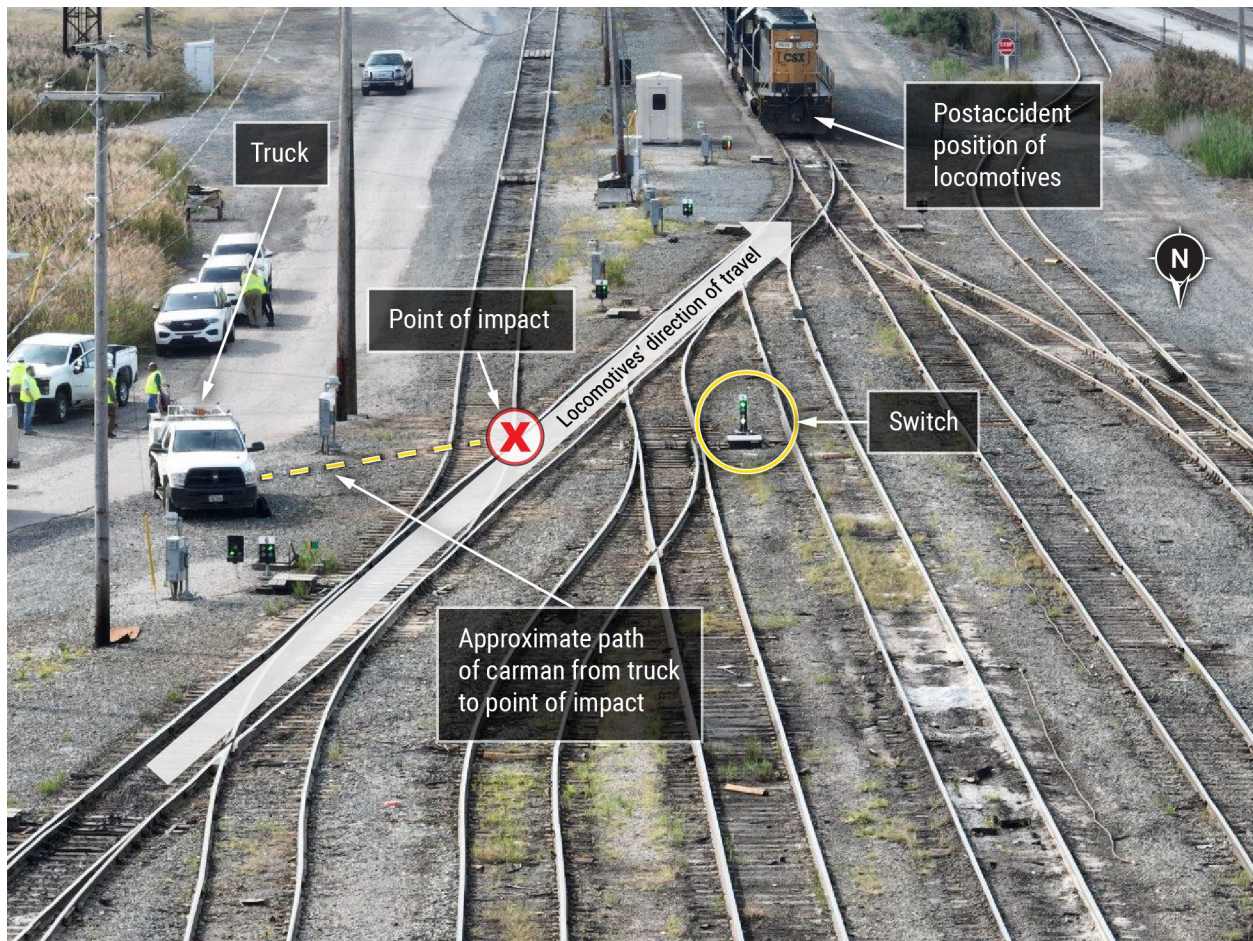


Figure. Accident scene. (Source: CSX.)

The locomotives involved in the accident were operating as yard job Y397 and were being used to perform switching work under the control of a single remote control operator. At the time of the accident, the remote control operator was positioned on the lower ladder on the west side of the trailing locomotive.

The CSX mechanical department crew involved in the accident consisted of two carmen. They started their shift at 11:00 pm, September 16, 2023, the day before the accident. Shortly before the accident, they parked a truck east of the lead track and several yard tracks. Yard surveillance camera video reviewed by National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigators showed the accident carman exit the driver's side door of the truck and walk west toward the switch on yard track 5. His movement placed him on the lead track and in the path of the locomotives. The second carman, who was unaware that an accident had occurred, exited the truck's

passenger door and crossed the lead track to place a blue signal on yard track 5.³ As the second carman returned to the truck, he saw the accident carman lying near the lead track. The second carman then radioed to stop all train movement in the yard and request help.⁴

While on scene, NTSB investigators reviewed data from forward facing locomotive image recorders (including the remote control locomotives and a passing train) and a yard surveillance camera, observed remote control train operations, completed interviews, inspected the locomotives involved in the accident, and conducted sight distance observations. The NTSB's investigation is ongoing. Future investigative activity will focus on CSX's carmen safety procedure training and awareness.

As a result of this accident, CSX issued a safety alert to all employees emphasizing safety briefings, situational awareness, and knowledge of emergency action plans.

Parties to this NTSB investigation include the Federal Railroad Administration, CSX, and the Transportation Communications Union/International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.

³ Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 218.23 requires that blue signals be displayed in accordance with 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* Parts 218.25, 218.27, or 218.29 by each craft or group of workers prior to their going on, under, or between rolling equipment and may only be removed by the same craft or group that displayed them.

⁴ The radio message was broadcast to the yard master and all trains operating in the yard.