

# Actsafes Safety Bulletin #28

## RAILWAYS & RAILWAY EQUIPMENT



These guidelines are for your safety when working on-board trains, in railway yards, or in the vicinity of railway equipment. These guidelines do not discuss work on or around electric third rail trains or tracks of the type used in many rapid transit systems. Check local regulations for specific guidelines, regulations, and required training.

In Canada, host railways companies typically own the property on or around the rail lines. Their safety rules and policies should be consulted and must prevail.

### 1. GENERAL SAFETY RULES:

- a. Remain alert and aware of your surroundings at all times. Trains and railway yards can present hazardous situations with which you are not familiar.
- b. Know the rules listed below. Railway personnel are familiar with these rules and may assume that all personnel in the area are also familiar with them.
- c. Do not attempt to cross in front of locomotives. Locomotives and railway cars require long distances to stop and have blind spots where they cannot see pedestrians or vehicles.

### 2. WALKING IN A RAILWAY YARD:

- a. Listen for approaching engines or railway cars. Walk at a safe distance from the side of the tracks. Avoid walking between the rails or on the railway ties. Pay attention to footing. If it is necessary to turn your head or look backward, stop and look before proceeding. Rail cars can roll easily and quietly if left unsecured. Never rely on your hearing alone.
- b. Expect the unexpected. Engines, railway cars or other equipment may move without warning on any track in either direction.
- c. **DO NOT RELY ON OTHERS TO WARN YOU** of approaching engines, railway cars or other equipment. Even if personnel have been assigned to provide warning, stay alert. You may not hear or see the warning.
- d. Maintain a safe distance from passing engines, railway cars or other equipment to avoid being struck by projecting or falling objects.
- e. Do not sit, stand, step, walk or place coins or other objects on the rails, switches, guard rails or other parts of the track structure.
- f. After looking in both directions to be sure there are no approaching engines or railway cars, cross tracks immediately.
- g. Take extra precautions if it is raining, snowing or if there are icy conditions. Snow may conceal trip hazards. Avoid walking or working under icicles. Keep all steps clear of ice, snow and other slippery substances.
- h. Stand clear of all tracks when trains are approaching or passing in either direction. Do not stand on one track while trains are passing on other tracks.



**3. WORKING IN THE RAILWAY YARD:**

- a. Be aware of the surface on which you are walking or working.
- b. Stand still and clear of the track when referring to paperwork or using portable communications devices.
- c. When walking from behind or out of an engine, railway car, building or other structure look in both directions before approaching any railway track.
- d. Listen for the movement of engines, railway cars or equipment.

**4. RIDING EQUIPMENT:**

- a. Restrict riding on equipment to essential personnel whose duties require riding or who are properly authorized. Riders must ride only in spaces provided for that purpose.
- b. Restrict personnel from riding on the side of the car or engine. Observe that no one is doing so before passing structures and other engines or railway cars. Clearances are rarely sufficient for both the rider and the rail car.
- c. Remain alert for conditions that can cause abrupt changes in speed. Examples include: train braking, changes in grade, wet or icy tracks, and entering or leaving a railyard or train station.

**5. PROTECT YOURSELF FROM ABRUPT CHANGES IN SPEED BY:**

- a. Remaining seated as much as possible. Place both feet on the floor, on a foot-rest or firmly on the floor at the base of a wall or other stable structure in front of you.
- b. If standing, stand with feet a shoulder's width apart, one foot slightly ahead of the other. Use your hands to brace against a wall or hold on to a grab rail.
- c. If walking, have a firm grip on grab rails, bulkhead edges or an overhead grab rail. Halt until the abrupt change ceases.

**6. WORKING ON OR AROUND RAILWAY EQUIPMENT:**

- a. Remain alert for the unexpected movement of equipment.
- b. Observe the condition of equipment before using it. Look for loose, bent or missing stirrups, ladder rungs and brake platforms.
- c. Use side ladder and face equipment as you ascend or descend equipment. Be alert for unexpected movement and observe for obstructions before ascending or descending.
- d. Dismount or mount equipment only when it is in a stopped position.

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- e. Cross over standing equipment by using engines or railway cars that are equipped with end platforms and handrails. Not all cars are so equipped. Never place any part of the body on or between the coupler and the end sill of the railway car.
- f. Restrict crossing from freight car to freight car while they are moving.
- g. Cross between passenger cars by holding on to railings and grab bars. Remain aware of walking surface conditions.
- h. Cross through equipment only when authority has been given. This to be done only when the selected car is equipped with a crossover platform and hand holds.
- i. **DO NOT CRAWL UNDER ANY RAILWAY CAR**, including cars which are standing still, unless authorized to do so by the authority designated by the railway.

At all times when any member of the cast or crew must work under any railway car, a person trained in railway signals shall act as a spotter. A flag or similar signaling device is to be displayed so as to be clearly visible to the train operator while work under any railway car is being performed. The car or string of cars should be properly secured with an appropriate number of hand brakes.

- j. Allow sufficient clearance in front of, in back of, and to the side when walking around railway equipment. Such equipment may move without warning. (Canadian Pacific Railways requires at least 5 metres (15 feet)).