

Fatality Analysis of Maintenance-of-way  
Employees and Signalmen



**FAMES**



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**Dedication:** *The FAMES Committee dedicates its efforts to all roadway workers who have lost their lives in the performance of duty and to the families, loved ones, and coworkers they have left behind.*

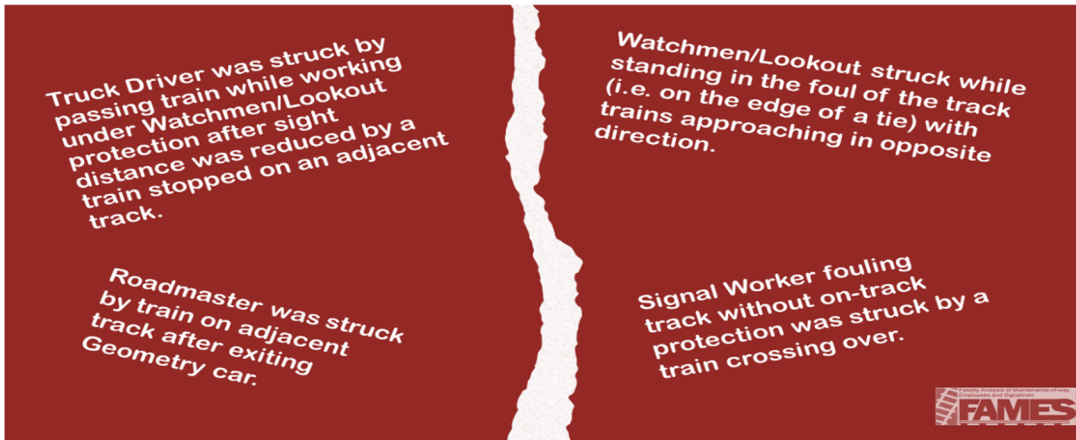
# Roadway Workers Fatally Injured by Trains or On-Track Equipment in Multiple Track Territory

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**Mission Statement:**

*The Mission of the Fatality Analysis of Maintenance-of-way Employees and Signalmen (FAMES) Committee is to analyze all fatalities and selected related incidents in order to make recommendations to reduce the risk of future occurrences and eliminate fatalities to roadway workers.*

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*FAMES, as of the date of this publication, has analyzed 89 individual cases, of which, 46 involved trains or on-track equipment where two or more tracks were present. Below is the breakdown of the hazards and statistics pertaining to those accidents.*

There are unique hazards while working on or near multiple tracks that increase the risks for Roadway Workers. The FAMES committee has observed the following conditions through the investigation of numerous fatal accidents:

- Movements of trains and on-track equipment occurred on tracks not expected.
- A watchman's warning may not be for the train you can see and expect.
- Impaired vision and hearing makes it difficult to distinguish the direction and number of movements on multiple tracks.
- Watchman/Lookouts failures.
- Fouling the track when not necessary or without on-track protection.

Of the **46** fatalities in multiple track territory analyzed by FAMES, **22** accidents (47 percent) were found to occur in territories involving more than two tracks. This is a disproportional accident ratio, when compared to the entire rail network, as multiple track territory only accounts for **13** percent of the rail network.

### **Findings:**

- **Over half of the accidents** occurred on an adjacent track where work was **not** occurring.
- **30 percent of accidents** involved a Watchman/Lookout either not performing their duties or the fatally injured was the Watchman/Lookout.
- **In one third of the accidents**, the safety briefing failed to identify conditions or was not conducted.
- **The risk of being struck by a train increases as the maximum authorized speed of the track increases.**

## Recommendations:

- Do not foul a track without proper protection, including fouling the adjacent track to monitor work being conducted.
- Every roadway worker must understand the predetermined place of safety, the speed of movement on the track, protection on adjacent track (if needed) and any other unique conditions that could impede your ability to detect a train.
- Care must be taken in establishing train approach warning for all adjacent tracks. Roadway Workers must comply with watchman's warning even if they cannot immediately determine the approach of any oncoming trains or on-track equipment.
- Do not return to work until all watchmen have given indication that it is safe to do so.
- Watchman/Lookout must give full attention to the detection of approaching trains. A watchman/lookout must:
  - Identify multiple movements
  - Provide distinct and timely warnings
  - Maintain required sight distance
  - Never perform other duties
  - Maintain a safe position, as discussed in the on-track safety briefing

For more information, see the FAMES [Watchman/Lookout alert](#).

***NEVER ASSUME THE DIRECTION OR TRACK FROM WHICH THE NEXT TRAIN MAY APPROACH.***

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*The FAMES Committee consists of safety representatives from a cross section of rail labor, railroad management, and federal regulators. FAMES is a continuous improvement process that relies on the candid sharing of available data and the views of its participants. To enable the process, FAMES explicitly refrains from making any findings regarding whether any past or present practice or protocol satisfies any legal duty or standard of care.*

*The views, opinions, and recommendations contained in this report are those of the FAMES Committee and do not necessarily represent the views, opinions, or recommendations of any specific railroad, labor organization, or governmental agency.*

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