



# SOFA Lifesavers

Share Knowledge ~ Save a Life ~ Zero Fatalities

As a cross-industry collaboration for over 20 years, the SOFA Working Group has identified the Possible Contributing Factors for more than 210 switching operations fatalities since 1992. The SOFA Working Group reports its findings and emerging data trends with the goal of zero fatalities in the railroad industry.

## Why Job Brief?

1 in 5 switching operations fatalities lacked an adequate job briefing



**Case Example:** A three-person crew shoving cars into an industry found cars left foul of an adjacent track. The conductor held a job briefing with the brakeman on the moves to be made, and the brakeman understood he would control the switching and car movements. After shoving the cars to make the coupling, the conductor told the brakeman the cars were coupled, and he was in the clear. The brakeman attempted to uncouple from the cars, but failed. He then requested the engineer make a second move to create slack between the cars so they could be uncoupled. The engineer complied, and the conductor, who was at the far end of the movement, was caught between the leading car and second car suffering fatal injuries. **Take Away:** All crew members should be involved in the initial job briefing and re-brief whenever anything changes during the work.

### What?

A job briefing is a two-way exchange of information by an entire crew, and with other crews, to reach an understanding of the initial work tasks, and the tasks being performed anytime a change unexpectedly occurs, such as a failure to couple.

### When?

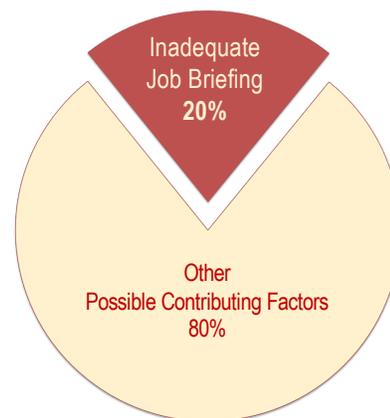
At the beginning of each tour of duty, all crew members meet and discuss all safety matters and work to be accomplished. Additional briefings are held anytime the work changes and when necessary to protect crew safety during their performance of service.

### How?

In every initial and updated job briefing, each crew member should consider the following key questions for each task:

- Who will act?
- What is about to be done?
- Where will the action occur?
- When will the action occur?
- Why is this act being done?

- ✓ *Maintain ongoing crew communication during an entire switching operation.*
- ✓ *Remain vigilant for changes in job tasks or anomalies affecting the work.*
- ✓ *Stop a job when circumstances change, remind crew members to do the same.*
- ✓ *Update initial job briefing with entire crew when any circumstance changes.*



## Most Common Findings in Switching Operations Fatalities

Close / No Clearance

25%

Inexperienced Employee

22%

Industry Hazard

21%

Inadequate Job Briefing

20%

Struck by Mainline Train

17%