

7 Rail Safety Challenges: Are You Prepared?



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Rail sites present a number of safety challenges, from spotting and orientation to preventing falls and keeping employees out of harm's way. Although rail safety solutions play a critical role in preventing injuries at your work site, this equipment must be combined with well-defined safety procedures and training for your workers.

Failing to take proper rail safety precautions may negatively impact your bottom line. Most commonly, injuries in the workplace lead to increased downtime as well as reduced efficiency and throughput.

There are more serious consequences, however, such as legal ramifications. Some examples include an employee suing post-injury, your company not meeting delivery deadlines for a client or OSHA compliance issues not being met. Additionally, slips and falls may cause damage to your equipment, which can be costly to repair.

If you're looking for rail fall prevention strategies, it's important to first understand common hazards associated with rail sites. Here are seven common rail safety challenges and how to prevent them.

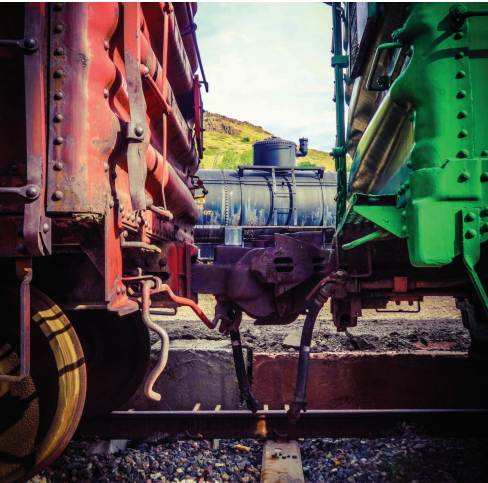


1. Safely Accessing The Top Of The Rail Car

To prevent injuries, workers need safe access to the top of the rail car. Fall prevention equipment, such as rail safety cages, is often the best way to accomplish this. A lack of rail safety equipment makes working conditions dangerous and may lead to falls, injury and death.

2. Inability To Perform Tasks Safely

This usually boils down to two factors: training and the right safety equipment. Installing rail safety solutions is an important first step, but it's not enough. You need to train your employees on proper safety procedures and how to use safety equipment correctly.



3. Coupling Or Uncoupling Of Rail Cars

When rail cars come into your site, it's helpful to know whether cars will be coupled or uncoupled. Rail safety challenges come into play when you have different length cars or if they're longer or shorter than you anticipated. That's why it's important to upgrade your equipment so it can handle these situations.

If new equipment isn't feasible, find a workaround to reduce the risk of injuries. Although a workaround can decrease throughput and efficiency, it's a useful fall prevention strategy to increase safety at your site when you don't have the right equipment.

4. Loading/Unloading Arms And Hoses

Moving loading/unloading arms and hoses from the rail to the rail car can be a dangerous task. It's important to know which method you're going to use, such as pulling with a rope or dropping from above. Also, before installing rail safety equipment, make sure your equipment provider understands your method for moving arms and hoses. This ensures your vendor can properly advise you on the right safety equipment for your needs. Installing the wrong type of rail safety equipment could lead to injuries.

5. Spotting Of Rail Cars

Rail car spotting is one of the hardest practices to instill in your team, but it's also one of the most important steps in fall prevention. Best practices for safe and effective rail car spotting depend on whether your cars are coupled or uncoupled.

Although rail safety solutions are important in spotting your rail cars, using a human spotter also helps. Even with the right equipment, mis-spotting puts your workers at risk for injury. Using a human spotter in tandem with safety equipment helps to mitigate the risk of injury during loading and unloading.

6. Weather And Environmental Conditions

While you can't control the weather, it's important to understand its impact on your facility. For instance, rain or snow may cause slippery conditions. Before accessing the top of a rail car during or after inclement weather, be sure workers assess the situation and dry off any wet equipment.

7. Housekeeping Issues

Keeping your rail site clean and relatively mess-free may seem like an impossible task. With so many moving parts, drips, spills, leaks and splashes are bound to occur. Since liquids on the ground or on rail cars may lead to injury, hospitalization or death, it's important to teach your workers to take caution when working with liquids and to clean up spills immediately. It is also important to keep hoses and other materials stored in an orderly manner to prevent trips.

There's no way to prevent rail safety challenges altogether. However, by combining safety equipment with training, you'll be more prepared to handle issues as they arise and taking an important step to improve safety at your site.



Invest in safety equipment and fall prevention solutions that improve safety at your facility. To learn more, contact an expert from Carbis Solutions today.

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