



# LESSONS LEARNED

## Railroad Near Miss

### WHAT HAPPENED?

A driver was exiting Highway 101 southbound onto a one lane farm road. This farm road immediately crosses a single track railroad. This crossing is not equipped with paddles or lights. As our driver was turning right, a 2-ton farm truck with trailer was exiting the farm road and entering the southbound Highway 101. Because of the length of the farm truck and trailer, the trailer was still on the tracks as our driver was attempting to exit the highway and cross the railroad tracks. The road is one lane and does not allow room for way traffic. The Mears driver stated that his attention was focused on getting off the highway and avoiding contact with the farm truck. The driver crossed the tracks without looking both ways before crossing. After the driver crossed the railroad tracks, he turned left (south) onto another farm road and noticed the train to his left passing him and coming to a stop. The Mears driver and passenger continued traveling to the jobsite (approximately a half mile further south). Upon arrival to the jobsite, a railroad flagger assigned to the project stopped all work activities to discuss the near miss. The employee and his passenger very narrowly avoided being struck by the train.

### CAUSAL FACTORS

- Leadership failed to recognize and address potential hazards of crossing an uncontrolled railroad track and single lane access. A better crossing route was not considered until after the incident. Access to the site was not identified in the SSSP or the JTSA from the day of the near miss.
- Absence of paddles and lights at railroad crossing.
- Driver's attention was on farm truck crossing railroad tracks - failed to look before crossing.
- Driver had not attended defensive or distracted driving training.

### CAUSAL FACTORS

- Ensure every access is assessed thoroughly for potential hazards.
- All jobsite access will be made at a crossing further south, where lights and paddles are present.
- Defensive driving will be required of all employees driving company vehicles.

### LESSONS LEARNED

- Hazards associated with working along railroads will be addressed in SSSP and reviewed during JTSA's.
- Uncontrolled railroad crossings pose additional hazards and should be avoided.
- When line of sight to oncoming trains is obscured, a spotter must be present.
- Reinforce the importance of making safe decisions and the potential consequences for unsafe behaviors.