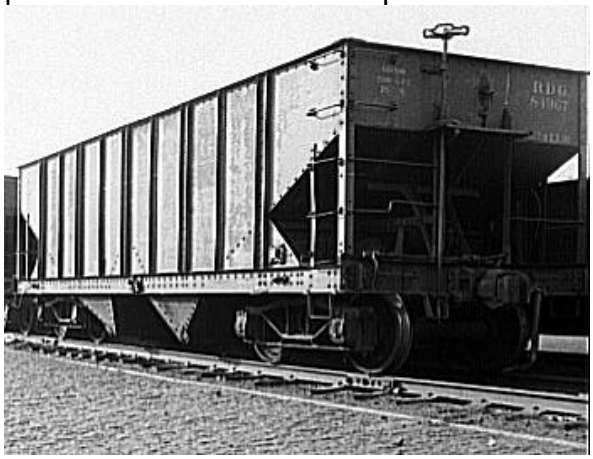
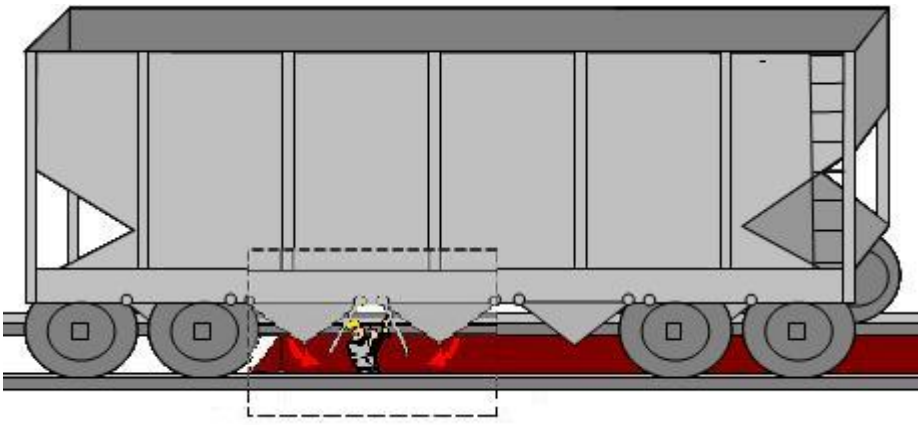
Rail Car Discharge Doors Alert

June 2008

Safety and Health are Values!

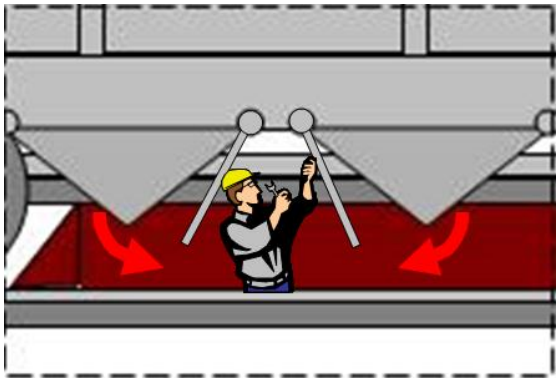
A near-fatal accident occurred when a mechanic working on a rail car was pinned between two air-operated discharge doors that suddenly opened. The control valve was in the "door open" position and the pressure in the air system had not been released. When a chain holding damaged doors shut was cut with a torch, the doors suddenly opened and pinned the mechanic, who was standing in a service trench under the rail car. The crushing injuries were serious because one door swung open farther than it normally would due to the broken mechanical linkage that was to be replaced.





Before working on rail car discharge doors, it is important to dissipate all stored energy that could cause the doors to move. Understand and follow the manufacturer's service/operations manual and be sure to:

- Block the wheels and set the handbrake.



- Fully release all air pressure.
- Relieve any other sources of stored energy such as springs.
- Place the doors in "zero energy" position point areas where movement or energy release cannot cause injury.

FreightCar America issued a repair procedure* notice on June 1, 2007 regarding discharge door linkage modifications on some rail cars.

Increased activity around the discharge doors increases the chances for injuries. Caution is warranted when working on any rail car of any manufacturer regardless of whether it has a pneumatic or manual discharge door system.

*The repair procedure was not available on the internet at the time this was published, but a copy can be obtained by requesting it through their website:

http://www.freightcaramerica.com/Service-Contacts.htm.