



# SOFA



Washington, DC  
March 2010



# *Purpose*

To let you know :

- What we have done so far.
- What we plan to do next.



# *Background*

- Formed in February 1998 at request of FRA
  - Switching fatalities to train and engine-service employees.
  - Determine causes and issue findings.
- Non-regulatory effort.
- Representatives from:
  - American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA)
  - Association of American Railroads (AAR)
  - Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET)
  - Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)
  - United Transportation Union (UTU)
- Has issued two reports covering 124 cases.
- Current group evaluated 55 more cases for the next report.



# SOFA Methodology

- Assign switching fatalities for review.
  - 55 cases from 2004 through 2009.
  - 124 cases have already been reviewed from 1992 through 2003.
- Case by case review of 55 new cases.
  - Record facts in a database.
  - Discuss the case.
  - Agree on Possible Contributing Factors (PCF).
- Classify the 55 cases.
  - SOFA 1-5
  - 15 Special Switching Hazards (SSH)
- Look for commonalities and trends among 179 cases.
- Agree on findings.

**179 cases total**

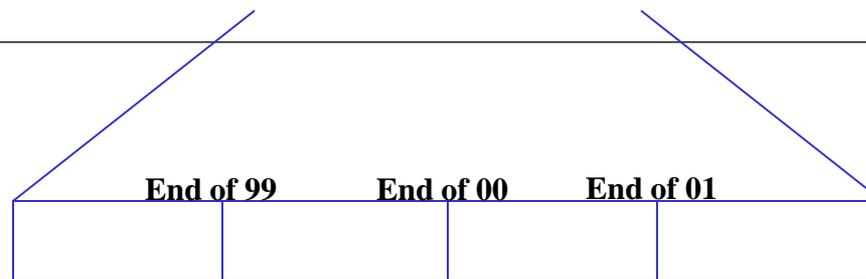
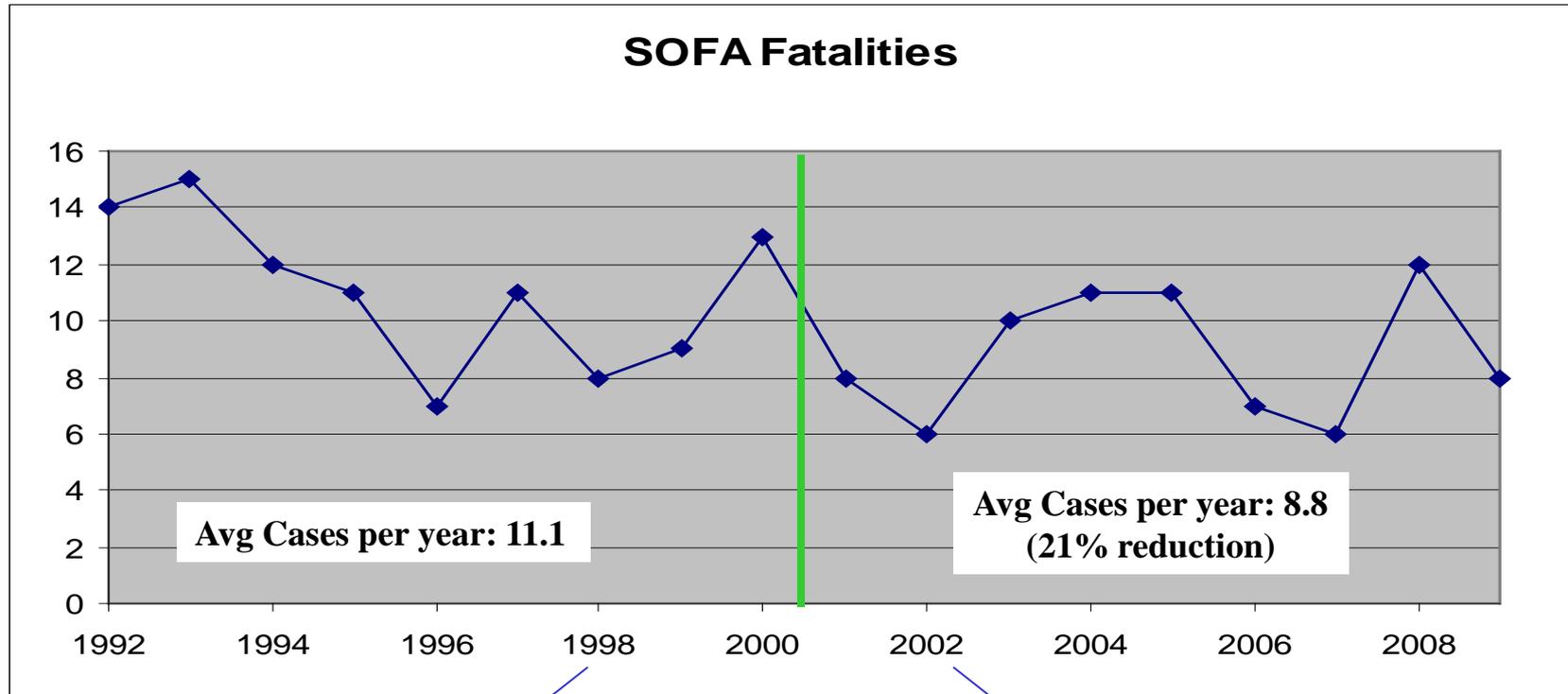
**466 PCFs cited over 179 cases**

**Note: A single case can qualify for more than one SOFA or SSH.**



# SOFA Fatalities: Two Time Periods

## Before and After the First SOFA Report



SOFA Report, Oct 99

Industry awareness of SOFA increases

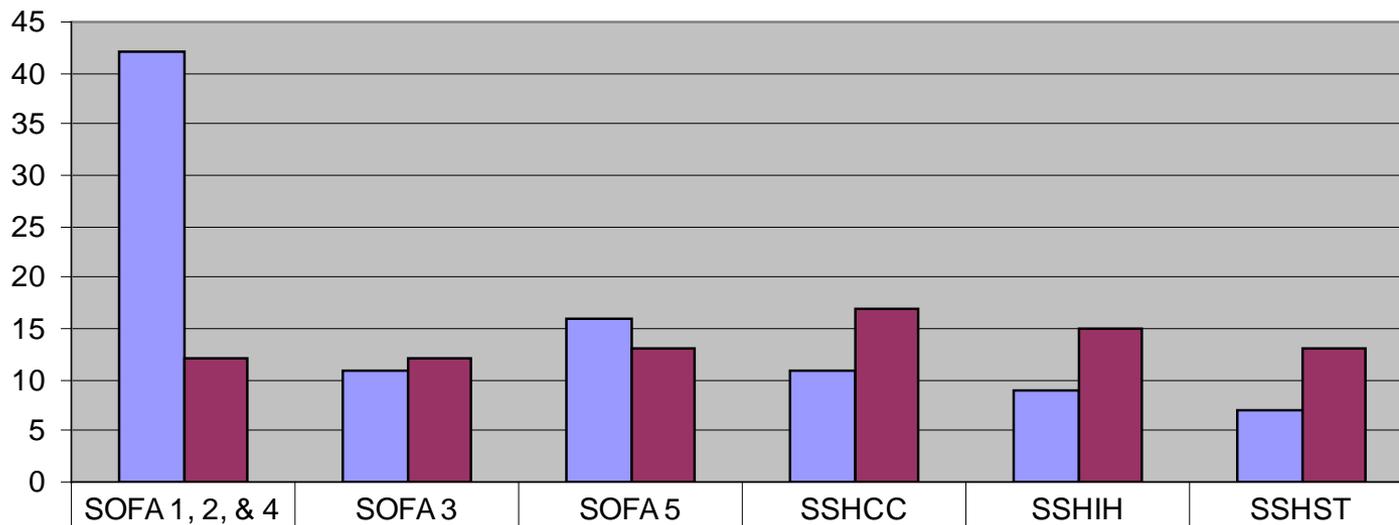
First year that SOFA Could have full effect.



# SOFA Fatalities: Two Time Periods

## Before and After the First SOFA Report

**SOFA Fatalities for  
5 SOFA Recommendations and 3 Major Switching Hazards**



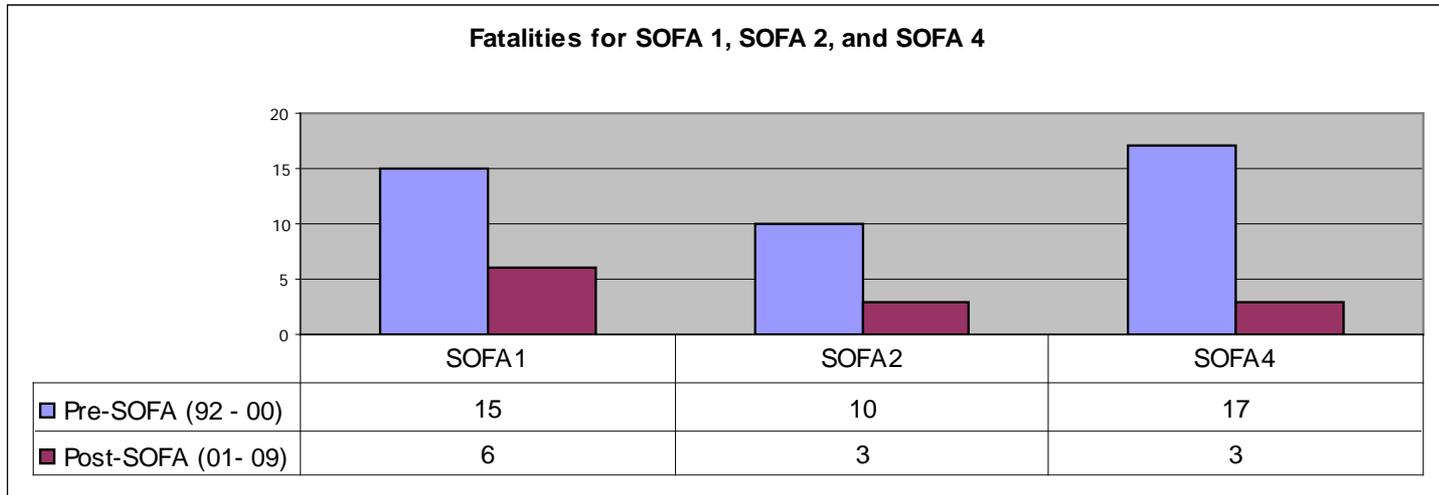
■ Pre-SOFA (92 - 00)	42	11	16	11	9	7
■ Post-SOFA (01 - 09)	12	12	13	17	15	13

SSHCC = Close Clearance; SSHIH: Industry Track Hazard; SSHST = Struck by Mainline Train



# Progress on SOFA 1, 2, and 4

- Overview
  - SOFA 1: Adjusting knuckles, adjusting drawbars, or installing EOT.
  - SOFA 2: Struck by equipment other than their own on yard or industry track.
  - SOFA 4: Move controlled by a combination of hand and radio signals or specific distances were not given.
- Progress has been made.



- Actions taken in these areas were effective.



# *SOFA Safety Forum*

- Met on February 25, 2010.
- Purpose:
  - Engage with industry leaders.
  - Gain insight into five proposed SOFA findings.
- Over 70 Attendees:
  - UTU
  - BLET
  - AAR
  - ASLRRA
  - Seven Class 1 Railroads
  - Seven Regional and Shortline Companies
  - AMTRAK
  - FRA
- Five breakout groups discussed these findings:
  - SOFA 3 (Job Briefing)
  - SOFA 5 (Mentoring)
  - Close Clearance
  - Hazards on Industry Track
  - Struck by Mainline Train.



# *What is Next?*

- SOFA working group meets in Spring 2010.
  - Discuss results of the SOFA Safety Forum.
  - Begin writing of final report.
- Final report in Fall 2010.