

H-135 AT-4

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: May 17, 1978

Forwarded to:

Mayor C. Beach, Jr.
Beattyville
Kentucky 41311

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)
H-78-33 & -34

About 9:30 a.m. on September 24, 1977, an Usher Transport, Inc., cargo tank-semitrailer transporting 8,200 gallons of gasoline was traveling southbound on Kentucky Route 11 in Beattyville, Kentucky. As it descended a 12.6 percent grade and rounded a sharp curve, railroad flashers activated; the truck crossed the L&N railroad tracks immediately in front of a train and struck a nearby building. The tank overturned onto a vehicle and slid to its final resting position. Gasoline, released from the damaged cargo tank-semitrailer, ignited.

Seven persons died and 6 persons were injured as a result of the crash; 6 buildings were burned beyond repair, and 17 vehicles and 11 other buildings were damaged.

The area at the bottom of the hill did not provide a sufficient recovery zone for the out-of-control truck. The first building struck was only about 8 feet from the low reveal curb; the other buildings were only about 4 1/2 feet from the curb. Parking was permitted in front of these buildings.

A new alignment for KY 11 is proposed within the next 2 to 3 years, and the new road may pass through the area of the demolished buildings. If the new alignment involves the area of the destroyed buildings, immediate acquisition of this land, by the State, would expedite the completion of this project and enhance safety. Continuous coordination with the State by the City is necessary to complete this needed safety improvement as soon as possible.

4AR-78-4

The Safety Board's investigation of this accident is continuing and the probable cause will be determined upon its completion. However, the Safety Board believes that these highway-related aspects warrant your immediate attention.

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the city of Beattyville work jointly with the State of Kentucky to:

Ban all parking on the west side of KY 11
from the L&N Railroad tracks to Main Street.
(H-78-33) (Class I, Urgent Action)

Coordinate with the citizens of Beattyville
actions necessary to assure the prompt completion
of the realignment of KY 11. (H-78-34) (Class I,
Urgent Action)

KING, Chairman, McADAMS, HOGUE, and DRIVER, Members,
concurred in the above recommendations.

for Francis H. McAdams
By: James B. King
Chairman