

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: June 29, 1978

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Forwarded to:

Honorable Douglas M. Costle  
Administrator  
Environmental Protection Agency  
401 M Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20460  
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SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)  
I-78-13

On April 6, 1978, the National Transportation Safety Board concluded a 3-day en banc hearing on railroad derailments and the carriage of hazardous materials. 1/ The hearing was prompted by the increasing number of derailments nationwide, especially those involving the release of hazardous materials from DOT 112A/114A "jumbo" tank cars. Forty-nine witnesses from the railroad industry, tank car builders and operators, shippers, State and local officials, firefighters, labor representatives, and the public testified at the hearing.

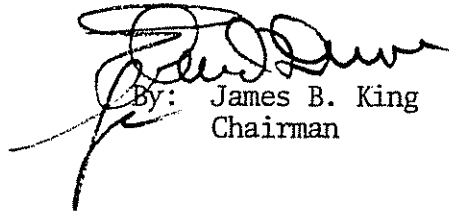
The evidence indicated that recent EPA regulations covering 271 environmentally hazardous substances were not adequately covered in Department of Transportation (DOT) hazardous materials regulations. Spokesmen for the railroad industry indicated that they needed a mechanism to insure that the hazardous properties of these substances are identified to them by shippers. Neither DOT nor EPA requires shippers to clearly indicate on shipping papers that these substances are hazardous to the environment. The DOT, which is responsible for hazardous materials notification regulations affecting shippers and the railroads, covers only 121 of these environmentally hazardous substances by regulation. The Safety Board believes that the railroads should require uniform regulations for notification of hazardous materials substances and that closer communications between EPA and DOT in their respective regulatory roles should be maintained. The Safety Board is aware that the EPA and the DOT have begun efforts to coordinate and make more uniform their regulatory standards.

1/ For more information read, "Analysis of Proceedings of the National Transportation Safety Board into Derailments and Hazardous Materials April 4-6, 1978," (NTSB-SEE-78-2).

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Environmental Protection Agency:

Assist the U.S. Department of Transportation in assuring that hazardous materials regulations issued by DOT are in agreement with EPA's hazardous materials regulation. (Class II, Priority Action) (I-78-13)

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

  
By: James B. King  
Chairman