



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Safety Recommendation

Log R-6/6G
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Date: July 14, 1989

In Reply refer to: R-89-61

Mr. Alvin R. Carpenter
President
CSX Rail Transport
CSX Transportation
500 Water Street
Jacksonville, Florida 32202

Mr. James R. Wolfe
President and Chief Executive Officer
Chicago and North Western
Transportation Company
One North Western Center
Chicago, Illinois 60606

Mr. Jeffrey R. Ladd
Chairman of the Board
METRA
547 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, Illinois 60606

About 11:44 a.m. central daylight savings time on July 30, 1988, Iowa Interstate Railroad Ltd. (IAIS) freight trains Extra 470 West and Extra 406 East collided head on within the yard limits of Altoona, Iowa, about 10 miles east of Des Moines, Iowa. All 5 locomotive units from both trains; 11 cars of Extra 406 East; and 3 cars, including 2 tank cars containing denatured alcohol, of Extra 470 West derailed. The denatured alcohol, which was released through the pressure relief valves and the manway domes of the two derailed tank cars, was ignited by the fire resulting from the collision of the locomotives. Both crewmembers of Extra 470 West were fatally injured; the two crewmembers of Extra 406 East were only slightly injured. The estimated damage (including lading) as a result of this accident exceeded \$1 million.¹

The IAIS operates over trackage of the Des Moines Union (DMU) and the Chicago North Western (CNW) between MP 353.2 and MP 364.5. Special instructions in IAIS timetable No. 2 for the third subdivision in which Newton, the home terminal and initial station of crews operating over this territory, is located states, in part, "Between MP 350² and MP 364.5, trains

¹For more detailed information, read Railroad Accident Report--"Head-on Collision Between Iowa Interstate Railroad Extra 470 West and Extra 406 East with Release of Hazardous Materials near Altoona, Iowa on July 30, 1988" (NTSB/RAR-89/04).

² IAIS officers testified that trackage recently had been acquired by the Heartland Corporation from the CNW between MP 350 and MP 353.2.

and engines will be governed by timetable and rules of the CNW and DMU. Permission from the CNW yardmaster must be obtained before entering these limits." The IAIS also operates over trackage of METRA between Blue Island and Joliet, Illinois, and over trackage of the CSX Transportation Company between Joliet and Bureau, Illinois.

The Safety Board received conflicting testimony regarding whether IAIS traincrews had been qualified on the Chicago North Western (CNW) operating rules to operate over trackage of the CNW at Des Moines. The superintendent of operations of the IAIS stated that crews had been qualified on the CNW rules. However, the engineer of Extra 406 East stated that he had not been qualified on the CNW rules. The Safety Board requested but did not receive from the IAIS a list of employees qualified on the CNW and the method by which the employees were qualified. The investigation revealed that IAIS also operates over trackage of METRA and the CSX. The Safety Board believes that the IAIS should require its operating employees to be properly qualified on the operating rules for the territory of the other railroads over which they operate before they are allowed to operate as the engineer and conductor. Furthermore, the CNW, the CSX, and METRA are responsible for determining if crews of other railroads operating over their territory are qualified on the respective company rules. The Safety Board believes that these railroads should determine if IAIS crews operating over their territory are properly qualified.

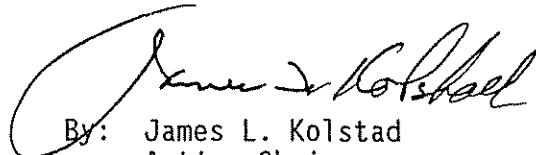
Therefore, as a result of its investigation, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Chicago and North Western Transportation Company:

Determine that operating employees of other railroads are appropriately qualified to operate over trackage of your railroad. (Class II, Priority Action) (R-89-61)

The National Transportation Safety Board is an independent Federal agency with the statutory responsibility "... to promote transportation safety by conducting independent accident investigations and by formulating safety improvement recommendations" (Public Law 93-633). The Safety Board is vitally interested in any action taken as a result of its safety recommendations. Therefore, it would appreciate a response from you regarding action taken or contemplated with respect to the recommendation in this letter. Please refer to Safety Recommendation R-89-61 in your reply.

Also, the Safety Board issued Safety Recommendations R-89-37 through -44 to the Iowa Interstate Railroad; R-89-45 through -51 to the Federal Railroad Administration; R-89-52 through -54 to the Research and Special Programs Administration; R-89-55 to the Archer Daniels Midland Company; R-89-56 to the Chemical Manufacturers Association and the National Industrial Transportation League; R-89-57 and -58 to the American Short Line Railroad Association; and R-89-59 and -60 to the Association of American Railroads. Also, the Safety Board reiterated Safety Recommendation R-87-17 to the Research and Special Programs Administration.

KOLSTAD, Acting Chairman, and BURNETT, LAUBER, NALL, and DICKINSON, Members, concurred in this recommendation.



By: James L. Kolstad
Acting Chairman