

R-346

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: February 11, 1981

Forwarded to:

Mr. W. J. Taylor
President and Chief Executive Officer
Illinois Central Gulf Railroad Company
233 North Michigan Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60601

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

R-81-32 and -33

About 7:58 a.m., on July 26, 1980, 4 locomotive units and 17 cars, including 7 placarded tank cars containing hazardous materials, of Illinois Central Gulf Railroad Company freight train No. 64 were derailed while moving at a calculated speed of about 35 mph around a 6° curve in Muldraugh, Kentucky. Two tank cars of vinyl chloride were punctured and their contents burned. Flames impinged two other tank cars of vinyl chloride, causing one to vent toxic fumes, but neither car ruptured. About 6,500 persons were evacuated from Muldraugh and the U.S. Army installation at Fort Knox. Four train crewmembers were injured during the derailment and property damage was estimated at \$1,348,394. ^{1/}

Investigation of this accident disclosed that train No. 64 derailed while moving on a track supposedly maintained to the Federal track safety standards for Class 3. An examination of the track in the curve and leading to the derailment disclosed excessive rail wear and irregularities and deterioration in gage, crossties, tie plate placement, and spiking conditions. The deteriorated crosstie conditions, excessive spacing between nondefective ties, and the excessively worn rail condition could have created a track condition that was unable to sustain the normal lateral forces of a passing train such as train No. 64.

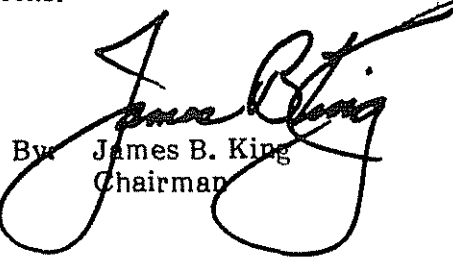
Therefore the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Illinois Central Gulf Railroad Company:

Establish and implement procedures to maintain mainline tracks and sidings to a level of safety not less than that which is prescribed by Federal regulations governing carrier-designated track classes. (Class II, Priority Action) (R-81-32)

^{1/} For more detailed information read "Railroad Accident Report--Illinois Central Gulf Railroad Company Freight Train Derailment, Hazardous Material Release and Evacuation, Muldraugh, Kentucky, July 26, 1980" (NTSB-RAR-81-1).

Establish and implement track maintenance standards which designate the limit of acceptable rail wear and which require rail removal when worn beyond the acceptable limits. (Class II, Priority Action) (R-81-33)

KING, Chairman, DRIVER, Vice Chairman, McADAMS, GOLDMAN, and BURSLEY, Members, concurred in these recommendations.


By James B. King
Chairman