

R-350A AI-4

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: August 11, 1981

Forwarded to:

Mr. T. S. Carter
President and Chief Operating Officer
The Kansas City Southern Railway Company
114 West 11th Street
Kansas City, Missouri 64105

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

R-81-82

On February 1, 1981, a southbound Kansas City Southern freight train collided with a northbound work extra operated by a Missouri Pacific traincrew at New Roads, Louisiana (MP-KCS 763.5). This portion of track is owned by the Missouri Pacific Railroad Company and dispatched by the Kansas City Southern Railway Company. There were no injuries or fatalities in this accident; however, in such circumstances the potential for catastrophic results always exists. The accident resulted in damages totaling \$555,000.


The trains collided 5 minutes after a meet order had expired and 3 minutes after the Kansas City Southern train had left the designated meet point. Neither train could communicate with the other because their radios operated on different frequencies. If both trains had radios on the same frequency, it is likely that they would have attempted to contact each other before the established meet time, thus improving the chances for avoiding the collision. In addition, there had been radio communication between the Kansas City Southern dispatcher and the Missouri Pacific traincrew concerning the meet order. If this conversation could have been monitored by the Kansas City Southern traincrew, the trains probably would not have collided.

Radio contact from one train to another to establish meeting points is not allowed under standard industrywide operating rules; however, a radio may be used to convey train location and other data from train to train. The National Transportation Safety Board is concerned that although these trains had operating radios they were not able to communicate because of incompatible operating frequencies. The inability to communicate increases the probability that accidents similar to the one described above will continue to occur.

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that The Kansas City Southern Railway Company:

In conjunction with the Missouri Pacific Railroad Company, require both ends of all trains while operating on Missouri Pacific trackage to be equipped with radios operable on a common frequency. (Class II, Priority Action) (R-81-82)

KING, Chairman, DRIVER, Vice Chairman, McADAMS, GOLDMAN, and BURSLEY, Members, concurred in this recommendation.


for By: James B. King
Chairman