

Log D-311A



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Safety Recommendation

Date: MAY 30 1995

In Reply Refer To: P-95-32

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On November 30, 1993, a 184-foot-long vehicle operated by Rountree Transport and Rigging (Rountree), Inc., was en route to deliver an 82-ton turbine to a Kissimmee Utility Authority (KUA) electricity generating plant under construction near Intercession City, Florida. The private access road to the plant facility crosses over a single railroad track owned by CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSXT). Because of the configuration of the truck and the profile of the roadway, the cargo deck of the vehicle began to bottom out on the roadway surface as it moved across the tracks. The Rountree crew proceeded to adjust the height of cargo deck to gain greater clearance while the vehicle straddled the track. They had finished raising the cargo deck and were preparing to move the vehicle when the lights and bells at the grade crossing activated. Seconds later, National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) train number 88, the Silver Meteor, carrying 89 passengers, struck the side of the cargo deck and the turbine. The locomotive and the first four cars of the eight-car consist derailed.¹

No deaths resulted from this accident. Six persons sustained serious injuries and 53 persons suffered minor injuries, and had to be evacuated to area hospitals. The Rountree vehicle and the turbine were destroyed, and the locomotive and the first three railcars were damaged extensively. Total damage from the accident exceeded \$14 million.

¹ For additional information, read Highway Accident Report--Collision of Amtrak Train No. 88 with Rountree Transport and Rigging, Inc., Vehicle on CSX Transportation, Inc., Railroad near Intercession City, Florida, November 30, 1993 (NTSB/HAR-95/01).

From its investigation of this accident, the Safety Board identified several safety issues, including hazard identification and avoidance and timely pipeline operator notification. When the train derailed, the locomotive and several other cars came to rest above and/or near two high-pressure hazardous liquid pipelines owned by Central Florida Pipeline Corporation (CFPL). Within minutes of the derailment, an Amtrak employee notified the CSXT dispatcher, who in turn, alerted the appropriate county and CSXT officials indicated on his emergency notification telephone list. The dispatcher did not notify CFPL.

At the accident site, no one noted the pipeline markers and reported the presence of the pipelines to the incident commander. Consequently, responders did not take any measures to protect themselves or the accident victims from a potential pipeline breach.

The earliest notification that CFPL received was at 1:50 p.m. from an off-duty CFPL employee who happened to see a news broadcast about the accident. The CFPL immediately shutdown of its pumping operations and dispatched personnel from Tampa, Florida, to the scene. By the time that the CFPL employees arrived at the accident site, CSXT had already contacted clean-up contractors who were bringing in bulldozers, cranes, and other heavy equipment that could potentially damage the pipelines.

The Safety Board received conflicting accounts from CSXT and CFPL regarding the potential hazard to the pipeline during wreckage-clearing operations. For example, the CFPL manager stated that when using a crane to move a railcar, CSXT crews set it down on the ground above the 10-inch-diameter pipeline. The CSXT contractor said that he had 14 years experience in operating heavy equipment and in installing pipelines and that his crews did not move the railcar in such a way as to endanger the pipeline. When CFPL excavated the pipelines, it found no visible indications of damage to the exterior of the pipe. Because of the costs and problems involved in performing an internal inspection of the two pipelines, CFPL elected to replace the sections of pipe in the accident area as a precautionary measure.

As a result of its investigation of this accident, the Safety Board concluded that the lack of cooperative action plan between CSXT and CFPL contributed to a break-down in communications. The Safety Board notes that before the Intercension City accident occurred, the Federal Railroad Association identified the need for all railroads and pipelines to actively coordinate their emergency response activities in a March 1993 FRA special notice. The Office of Pipeline Safety subsequently issued a similar recommendation to the pipeline industry in a March 1994 advisory, which was printed in the Federal Register.

The Safety Board is concerned about efforts by both members of the pipeline and the railroad industries to maintain the safety of emergency response, railroad, and pipeline personnel and property following a train derailment. A pipeline breach during an evacuation effort or during wreckage recovery operations would result in the release of a flammable product, which, if ignited could injure nearby workers and destroy or damage nearby property. Even if not ignited, a release would delay the safe resumption of railroad and pipeline operations through an affected area for days or even weeks while the environment is restored. The Safety Board

believes that industry associations, such as the Interstate Natural Gas Association of America, should take an active role in promoting better postaccident emergency coordination between pipeline companies and railroad companies.


The National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Interstate Natural Gas Association of America--

Advise your members of the pipeline safety issues identified in the Intercession City, Florida, accident report, and urge them to work with railroad operators in developing plans for handling emergencies involving both rail and pipeline. (Class II, Priority Action) (P-95-32)

Also, the Safety Board issued Safety Recommendations H-95-7 to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, H-95-8 and -9 to the Specialized Carriers and Rigging Association, H-95-10 to the International Association of Chiefs of Police, H-95-11 to the National Sheriffs' Association, H-95-12 to the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Laws and Ordinances, P-95-31 to the American Gas Association, P-95-33 to the American Public Gas Association, P-95-34 to the American Petroleum Institute, P-95-35 to the Central Florida Pipeline Corporation, P-95-36 to the State of Florida Division of Emergency Management, R-95-24 and -25 to the Association of American Railroads, R-95-26 and -27 to the American Short Line Railroad Association, R-95-28 to the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, R-95-29 to the Osceola County (Florida) Emergency Management Division, and R-95-30 through -32 to the CSX Transportation Corporation.

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 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 P-95-32.

Chairman HALL, Vice Chairman FRANCIS, and Member HAMMERSCHMIDT concurred in this recommendation.

By: 
James E. Hall
Chairman