

LOG P-311E



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Safety Recommendation

Date: MAY 30 1995

In Reply Refer To: P-95-36

Mr. Joseph F. Myers
Director
Division of Emergency Management
Department of Community Affairs
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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. 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). Osceola County emergency responders were on scene within 11 minutes of the collision. However, in formulating immediate emergency actions, the only potential hazard that on-scene emergency responders readily identified and closely monitored was the diesel fuel leaking from the locomotive. No emergency responder in the derailment area noted the pipeline markers and reported the presence of the pipelines to the incident commander. Consequently, they did not take any measures to protect themselves or the accident victims from a potential pipeline breach. Further, 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 began a shutdown of its pumping operations to reduce the pressure in its pipelines 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. Regardless of the actual hazard potential in this accident, the Board is concerned about efforts to maintain the safety of emergency response, railroad, and pipeline personnel and property during wreckage clearing operations. A breach in a hazardous liquid pipeline 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, release of this material would delay the safe resumption of railroad and pipeline operations through an affected area for days or even weeks while the environment is restored.

Following the on-scene investigation, the Safety Board reviewed the June 1992 Osceola County Disaster Plan, which contains standard operating procedures (SOPs) that incident commanders are to follow when coordinating the response effort at railroad incidents. For determining potential hazards following passenger train derailments, the SOP states, "[There is] little or no hazardous materials problem other than the train's own fuel." The SOP focuses on emergency response manpower and material requirements and passenger identification. It also includes evacuation guidelines for hazardous materials train incidents. It does not advise that responders should determine the presence of or potential endangerment to hazardous facilities, such as pipelines, or other buried facilities within the railroad right-of-way.

The Safety Board notes that the Florida Department of Community Affairs, Division of Emergency Management (DEM), approved the June 1992 Osceola County Disaster Plan as meeting all Federal and State emergency planning requirements. The Safety Board believes that as the agency responsible for the oversight of emergency management programs in the state, the DEM should lead the effort to have communities, railroad carriers, and pipeline carriers develop response plans that are more comprehensive in nature. By promoting early and better

postaccident coordination between affected parties, the DEM can ensure the safety of people and property within or adjacent to an accident area.

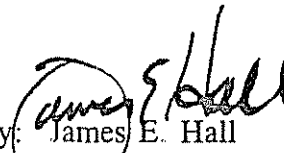
Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board makes the following recommendation to the State of Florida Division of Emergency Management--

In coordination with hazardous liquid and gas pipeline operators and railroads, establish procedures for prompt notification of all involved parties, including public safety officials, following a transportation accident and establish comprehensive plans for monitoring and maintaining protective control measures during wreck-clearing operations. (Class II, Priority Action) (R-95-36)

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-95-32 to the Interstate Natural Gas Association of America, 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, 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-95-36.

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

By: 
James E. Hall
Chairman