

R-321

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: September 15, 1980

Forwarded to:

Mr. Alan S. Boyd
President and Chief Executive Officer
National Railroad Passenger Corp.
400 North Capitol Street, N. W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

R-80-37

About 6:35 p.m., on July 9, 1980, Amtrak passenger train No. 225, moving westbound at 60 mph on track No. 3 at Linden, New Jersey, was passing Amtrak Rail Extra No. 4934, moving eastbound at 30 mph on track No. 2. As the trains passed, a 15-foot piece of buffer rail, which was protruding from a car on Rail Extra 4934, struck and penetrated the first car of passenger train No. 225. One passenger was killed, and 19 passengers were injured.

Passenger train No. 225 consisted of six self-propelled, electrically-driven commuter cars. Each car was 85 feet long and had four-wheel motor-driven trucks.

Rail Extra No. 4934 included 28 flat cars. Each flat car was equipped with two racks to carry continuous welded rails.

The first car of passenger train No. 225 was struck on the corner and under the floor on the opposite side from the engineer, and the steps on the corner of the car were destroyed. The rail then penetrated the side of the car between the fourth window and the car floor and entered the car. The sixth and seventh seats were torn loose from the floor and were destroyed, and the center partition also was destroyed.

Rail Extra No. 4934 had been loaded with continuous welded rail at New Haven, Connecticut, and had proceeded to Bristol, Pennsylvania, where, for 2 days, the continuous welded rail had been unloaded. During the unloading process, the short pieces of buffer rails, used to support the ends of the continuous welded rail in the carrying racks, were removed from the continuous welded rail after the unloading. Pieces of buffer rail apparently were laid loosely on the floor of the last two rail cars since after the accident, five 8- to 12-foot buffer rails were found loose on the floors of the cars. The rail that struck the passenger train had shifted so as to protrude from the side of the 31st car.

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RAR-80-12

The practice of allowing loose rail to lie unsecured on the floor of a flat car as a train moves over the track is dangerous and presents a serious threat to the traveling public, as well as to railroad employees. Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the National Railroad Passenger Corporation:

Immediately establish procedures for the securement of all material carried on flat cars of a continuous welded rail train and maintenance of way work trains. (Class I, Urgent Action) (R-80-37)

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

for *James B. King*
By: James B. King
Chairman