

R-269A

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: June 3, 1980

Forwarded to:

Mr. L. Cena
President
Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe
Railway Company
80 East Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, Illinois 60604

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

R-80-23 and -24

About 6:10 a.m., on October 2, 1979, Amtrak passenger train No. 4, the Southwest Limited, derailed 3 locomotive units and 17 cars while moving through a 7° curve on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company's (AT&SF) tracks at Lawrence, Kansas. Of the 147 passengers and 30 crewmembers, 2 persons were killed and 69 persons were injured. Property damage was estimated to be \$4,634,330. 1/

Investigation of this accident disclosed that the engineer assigned to train No. 4 was not sufficiently familiar with the rescheduled route the train was to take for the first time between Newton, Kansas, and Kansas City, Missouri, via Topeka, Kansas, and Lawrence. The engineer had not been over the route for 5 years and had not made a familiarization trip as prescribed in AT&SF Bulletin No. 308. The AT&SF made engineers responsible for their own compliance with Bulletin No. 308, and the AT&SF had no record of compliance or a method of enforcement. The engineer was awarded the assignment solely on the basis of seniority.

Since the engineer was not familiar with the route, he also was not aware of the location of speed reduction and automatic train stop signs or an automatic train stop inductor in the track about 1 mile west of the curves at Lawrence. A critical sign was not in place, and the automatic train stop system apparently was not operating because (1) the alarm whistle did not sound in the cab and (2) the brakes did not apply automatically as the train passed the inductor, despite the fact that the inductor was not acknowledged by the engineer. Consequently, the engineer was unaware of passing over the inductor and of the inoperable automatic train stop system.

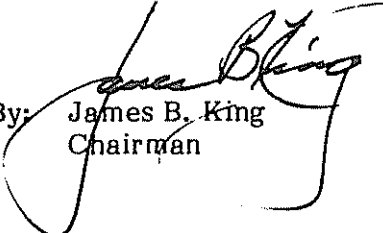
1/ For more detailed information read "Railroad Accident Report--Derailment of Amtrak Train No. 4, the Southwest Limited, on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company, Lawrence, Kansas, October 2, 1979" (NTSB-RAR-80-4).

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company:

Establish rules and procedures to verify that locomotive engineers are familiar with a district so they can operate safely in the event any fixed signal or other pertinent sign is inoperative or missing. (Class II, Priority Action) (R-80-23)

Establish special rules which explain and identify the location of automatic train stop inductors that are not located at automatic block signals. (Class II, Priority Action) (R-80-24)

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

By: 
James B. King
Chairman