

Accident No.: DCA12MR009

Accident Type: Train Derailment with Non-Railroad Fatalities

Location: Ellicott City, Maryland

Date: August 20, 2012

Preliminary Report

The information in this report is preliminary and will be supplemented or corrected during the course of the investigation.

On August 20, 2012, about 11:56 p.m. EDT, eastbound CSX Transportation (CSX) coal train U183-18 consisting of two locomotives and 80 cars loaded with coal, derailed the lead 21 cars at milepost 12.9 on the CSX Old Main Line Subdivision in Ellicott City, Maryland. Six of the 21 fell into a public parking area that was about 15 feet below track level on the north side. Other loaded coal cars involved in the derailment were overturned, spilling their content along the north side of the track.

Two people that were sitting on the north side of the railroad bridge at the time of the derailment sustained fatal injuries. No other injuries were reported and there was no evacuation.

A section of the main track was destroyed. The initial damage estimates provided by CSX are \$2.2 million, which includes environmental remediation. The weather at the time of the incident was cloudy skies and calm winds. The temperature was 65° F.

Train movements on the CSX Old Main Line Subdivision are governed by signal indications of a traffic control system. The maximum authorized speed for the track through the area of the derailment is 25 mph. The event recorder data showed the train was traveling at 25 mph when it derailed.

NTSB investigators reviewed track maintenance records (including rail inspections, previous failures, and repairs) for the area where the accident occurred. Rail samples from the accident area were collected and sent to the NTSB Materials Laboratory for analysis. In addition, NTSB investigators inspected and documented all railroad equipment including the track, signals, derailed cars and the locomotives.

Parties to the investigation include: the Federal Railroad Administration, CSX Transportation, and the Brotherhood of Maintenance-of-Way Employees.