

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: November 7, 1977

Forwarded to:

Mr. Paul H. Reistrup  
President  
National Railroad Passenger Corporation  
955 L'Enfant Plaza North, SW.  
Washington, D.C. 20024

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

R-77-36

On January 16, 1977, the second locomotive unit and 12 cars of Amtrak train No. 57 derailed on the Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company track at New Castle, Alabama. The train, with SDP-40-F-type locomotive units, was moving at a speed of 42 mph around a 5° curve; the superelevation of the curve was 4 inches, and the maximum allowable speed was 40 mph. 1/

During the investigation of this accident, the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) informed the Safety Board that certain modifications were being made to the trucks of SDP-40-F locomotive units to improve their riding and tracking qualities around curves. An improved vertical snubbing device on each truck is included in these modifications. The inspection of the second locomotive unit involved in this accident disclosed that the vertical snubbing device of the No. 2 truck was defective.

The lack of an adequate snubbing device could increase the oscillations of the locomotive truck from certain track conditions which in turn could contribute to widening of the track gage. Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the National Railroad Passenger Corporation:

Establish inspection and repair procedures that will insure that locomotive units with defective truck components will not be dispatched. (Class II, Priority Followup) (R-77-36)

BAILEY, Acting Chairman, McADAMS, HOGUE, and KING, members, concurred in this recommendation.

*Francis H. McAdams*  
for

By: Kay Bailey  
Acting Chairman

1/ For more detailed information about this accident read: "Railroad Accident Report--Derailment of Amtrak Train on Louisville and Nashville Railroad, New Castle, Alabama, January 16, 1977" (NTSB-RAR-77-9).