



# National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D. C. 20594

## Safety Recommendation

Date: AUG 23 1991

In Reply Refer To: R-91-50

Mr. James F. McMullen  
Chief  
California State Fire Marshal's Office  
7171 Bowling Drive, Suite 600  
Sacramento, California 95823-2034

On Wednesday, November 7, 1990, about 4:11 a.m. Pacific standard time, two Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company (ATSF) freight trains collided head on at milepost (MP) 25.6 in Corona, California. The westbound ATSF freight train 818, which was traveling from Barstow, California, to Hobart yard, City of Commerce, California, was on the Corona siding. It passed the stop signal, and the lead locomotive reentered the main track area, blocking all movement on the main track. The eastbound ATSF freight train 891, which was traveling from Hobart yard to Chicago, Illinois, was on the main track and collided with train 818. Each train had three-person crews.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of the collision, the entire crew of ATSF 818 was killed and four locomotives and three rail cars were derailed. The engineer and conductor of train 891 sustained serious injuries and the brakeman was killed; all three locomotives and five rail cars were derailed. The total damage was estimated to be \$4,400,000.

The Safety Board recognizes the effort that the ATSF made to maintain a list of telephone numbers of those who should be notified when an accident occurs. However, the list used in this accident did not include the names or phone numbers of the operators of the two pipelines that were in the vicinity of the accident site.

In California, the natural gas pipeline operators were under the jurisdiction of the California Public Utilities Commission (CALPUC), and the petroleum pipeline operators were under the jurisdiction of the California State Fire Marshal's Office. Both agencies had listings of their operators, but had not provided this information

<sup>1</sup>For more detailed information, read Railroad Accident Report--"Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company (ATSF) Freight Trains ATSF 818 and ATSF 891 on the ATSF Railway, Corona, California, November 8, 1990" (NTSB/RAR-91/03).

to the ATSF. When the accident happened, CALPUC was in the process of compiling a list of operators whose pipelines ran parallel to or crossed railroad rights of way.

Previous pipeline accidents have demonstrated how catastrophic such accidents can be. Considering the potential for an accident in Corona, the Safety Board believes that when a rail accident occurs, there is an urgent need to notify pipeline operators of pipelines that may be affected. The pipeline operators, governing agencies, and the rail carriers should work together to devise an efficient notification process.

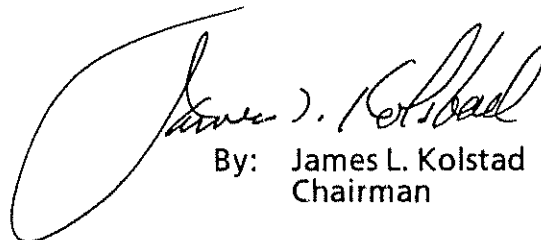
Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the California State Fire Marshal's Office:

In cooperation with the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Corporation and the California Public Utilities Commission, develop a complete list of 24-hour emergency telephone numbers of those pipeline operators whose transmission lines are near ATSF property. (Class II, Priority Action) (R-91-50)

Also, the Safety Board issued Safety Recommendations R-91-39 and -40 to the Federal Railroad Administration, R-91-41 through -44 to the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company, R-91-45 and -46 to the Association of American Railroads, R-91-47 to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, R-91-48 to the United Transportation Union, and R-91-49 to the California Public Utilities Commission.

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 vitally 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 R-91-50 in your reply.

KOLSTAD, Chairman, COUGHLIN, Vice Chairman, and LAUBER, HART, and HAMMERSCHMIDT, Members, concurred in this recommendation.



By: James L. Kolstad  
Chairman