

Log R-100 Unit 1880B P- R-77-13
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: June 1, 1977

Forwarded to:

Mr. Bruce Flohr
Acting Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

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About 6:28 p.m. on July 13, 1976, Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail) train No. 1994 collided with the rear of Conrail train No. 1992 in New Canaan, Connecticut. The commuter trains were operating from Grand Central Station in New York eastward to New Canaan over a single-track line. The collision killed 2 persons and injured 30 others. 1/

Train No. 1992 had arrived at New Canaan on the single station track about 6:15 p.m., had discharged its passengers, and had moved westward on the station track to clear a switch which led to another track. Train No. 1992 was to enter the other track so that the station track would be clear for train No. 1994, which was due to arrive at New Canaan at 6:31 p.m.

Train No. 1994 had passed an approach signal 2.1 miles west of New Canaan, which required that the train not exceed 30 mph and that it be prepared to stop at the next signal. The next signal, located 760 feet west of the switch at New Canaan, marked the end of the main track and was a dwarf signal which continually displayed a "restricting" aspect. This aspect required that a train be operated prepared to stop short of a train, obstruction, or switch not properly lined, and not at a speed over 15 mph. Train No. 1994 passed signal at an undetermined speed and struck the rear of train No. 1992, which was located about 340 feet east of the signal.

1/ For more detailed information, read "Railroad Accident Report: Collision of Two Consolidated Railroad Corporation Commuter Trains, New Canaan, Connecticut, July 13, 1976" NTSB-RAR-77-4.

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The track from the dwarf signal to the end of the line at New Canaan station was not part of the automatic-block signal system. Regardless of the occupancy of the station track, the signal displayed the same "restricting" aspect and did not require an engineer of an approaching train to stop when another train already occupied the track. The Safety Board made two recommendations to the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) on July 28, 1976, to improve this condition. The Connecticut DOT and Conrail took corrective action. However, similar hazardous conditions exist on other railroads.

On August 20, 1976, the Safety Board issued two safety recommendations to the Connecticut DOT and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) to alleviate passenger difficulties in operating the side doors of cars following an accident. The Connecticut DOT and the MTA are taking corrective action. Again, the car equipment on other commuter lines or that provided in the future may be similarly equipped.

The injuries sustained by many of the passengers in this accident were caused by the same features of the cars' interiors that caused injuries in the Botanical Garden Station accident in New York City on January 2, 1975, about which the Safety Board issued a report and recommendations. The cars involved in each accident are almost identical in their interior fittings. Even though corrective action has been started by the Connecticut DOT and the MTA on their cars, cars on other railroads are similarly equipped and may be so constructed in the future.

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Federal Railroad Administration:

Promulgate regulations for railroad commuter lines that will:

Establish standards for the interior design of commuter cars to prevent and reduce injuries from accidents;

Insure that when the cars' power source fails, emergency lighting is adequate and doors can be operated easily from inside and outside;

(3)

Establish standards for the evacuation of
passengers;and

Prevent a passenger train from entering an
occupied block. (Class II, Priority Followup)
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TODD, Chairman, BAILEY, Vice Chairman, McADAMS, HOGUE, and
HALEY, Members, concurred in the above recommendation.

Kay Bailey
for

By: Webster B. Todd, Jr.
Chairman