

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: April 21, 1977

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Forwarded to:  
  
Honorable Bruce M. Flohr  
Deputy Administrator  
Federal Railroad Administration  
400 Seventh Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590  
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SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)  
R-77-6 through 8

About 8:17 a.m., on June 30, 1976, 2 locomotive units and 11 cars of Amtrak train No. 59 derailed on the Illinois Central Gulf Railroad Company's track near Goodman, Mississippi. Thirty-four of the 145 passengers on the train were injured, 11 crewmembers were injured, 6 trackmen were injured, and 1 trackman was killed. Property damage amounted to about \$453,100. 1/

Investigation of the accident disclosed that train No. 59 was moving at 88 mph when it derailed. The maximum authorized speed for passenger trains in the derailment area is 79 mph.

A passenger train speed of 79 mph requires track that is maintained to the Federal Track Safety Standards for Class 4. During the 4 workdays before the accident, a trackcrew had replaced defective crossties and regaged the track just north of the derailment point. An examination of this track disclosed variations in gage, irregularities in line and cross level, and tie plate movement; even with these irregularities the track complied with standards for Class 4 track. This track area, however, had additional critical conditions that were not ascertained by using procedures in the Federal Track Safety Standards and contributed to the accident.

1/ For more detailed information on this accident, read Railroad Accident Report - Derailment of Amtrak Train on Illinois Central Gulf Railroad, near Goodman, Mississippi, June 30, 1976. (NTSB-RAR-77-2)

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

Amend track geometry standard 49 CFR 213.55, Alignment, so that it defines "uniformity," establishes a maximum rate-of-change in alignment deviation, and establishes the maximum number of feet between which each alignment mid-offset measurement shall be taken. (Class II, Priority Followup) (R-77-6)

Amend track geometry standard 49 CFR 213.63, Track Surface, so that it defines "uniform profile," establishes maximum rate-of-change in profile and cross level deviations, and establishes the maximum number of feet between which each profile midordinate measurement and each cross level measurement shall be taken. (Class II, Priority Followup) (R-77-7)

Include in review of current FRA track safety regulations, investigation and testing to determine if the minimum track conditions that are required for the FRA classes of track by 49 CFR 213.9 are adequate for all types of trains and for the maximum allowable speed for each class. (Class II, Priority Followup) (R-77-8)

TODD, Chairman, BAILEY, Vice Chairman, McADAMS, HOGUE, and HALEY, Members, concurred in the above recommendations.

By: Webster B. Todd, Jr.  
Chairman