

SUMMARY FOR FE-24-06
SELECTED POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

SELECTED FACTORS

Railroad: CSX Transportation Incorporated (CSX)
Location: Selkirk, New York
Region: 1

Month: December
Date: Dec. 18, 2006
Time: 11:57 p.m., EST

Data for Fatally Injured Employee(s)

Car Inspector
53 years old
13 years of service
Last rules training: Jan. 14, 2006
Last safety training: Jan. 14, 2006
Last physical: Aug. 14, 2005

Data for All Employees (Craft, Positions, Activity)

Craft: Maintenance of Equipment

Positions:

Car Inspector
Two additional Car Department employees
Yard Master

CSX Train No. Q164-18

Conductor
Locomotive Engineer

Activity

En route in all terrain vehicle (ATV) to work site
to perform a train inspection.

EVENT

A Car Inspector was fatally injured during a collision between a locomotive
and the ATV he was driving at a highway-rail grade crossing.

SUMMARY FOR FE-24-06 CONTINUED

POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

PCF No. 1

The Car Inspector, driving an ATV, collided with a locomotive at a highway-rail grade crossing.

PCF No. 2

The Car Inspector failed to stop at the STOP sign posted immediately before the private industrial crossing, which was equipped with STOP signs only.

PCF No. 3

As the incident occurred at night, the Car Inspector may not have noticed the STOP sign due to poor visibility.

REPORT: FE-24-2006

RAILROAD: CSX Transportation, Incorporated (CSX)

LOCATION: Selkirk, New York

DATE & TIME: Dec. 18, 2006; 11:57 p.m., EST

EVENT¹: A Car Inspector was fatally injured during a collision between a locomotive and the all terrain vehicle (ATV) he was driving at a highway-rail grade crossing.

EMPLOYEE: Craft: Maintenance of Equipment

Occupation: Car Inspector

Age: 53 Years

Length of Service: 13 years

Last Rules Training: Jan. 14, 2006

Last Safety Training: Jan. 14, 2006

Last Physical: Aug. 14, 2005

CIRCUMSTANCES PRIOR TO THE ACCIDENT

The Car Inspector reported for his first tour of duty after returning from four days of vacation at 3 p.m. on Dec. 18, 2006. Upon reporting for duty, he received a start-of-shift safety meeting and job briefing. Among the topics discussed was the fatal accident that had occurred only five days earlier in Syracuse, New York, involving a Car Department employee who was struck at a rail crossing in CSX's Dewitt rail facility on Dec. 14, 2006.

Before the completion of his first shift, the Car Department employee was called to fill a vacancy on the next shift, to begin at 11 p.m. Upon reporting for his second shift, the Car Inspector received another start-of-shift safety meeting and job briefing, which also included a discussion of the same fatal accident in Dewitt the week before.

At 11:35 p.m., the Car Inspector was assigned to inspect CSX Train No. Q436-19 on Yard Track No. 13. An ATV would be used as transportation to carry out this assignment. On his way to the west end of Yard Track No. 13 to join two other Car Department employees

¹ "Event" is defined as "occurrence that immediately precedes and directly results in the fatality." Possible contributing factors are identified in the following report and attached summary.

who had preceded him in order to place a blue flag on the track, he stopped first at the car shop to get gas for the ATV.

After fueling up, the Car Inspector departed the car shop and continued on toward Yard Track No. 13. He proceeded through a tunnel immediately to the east of the hump tower, and made a right hand turn onto the service road immediately behind the tower, following it in a westbound direction.

In the mean time, CSX Train No. Q164-18 had been released to the department and was approaching the Inbound Lead Crossing on the service road immediately behind the hump tower. The crew of CSX Train No. Q164-18 consisted of a Conductor and a Locomotive Engineer. Both had reported for duty at 10:30 p.m. after a statutory period of rest. At 11:40 p.m., they boarded their train and, after checking the required paperwork, they informed the Yard Master at 11:45 p.m. that they were ready to proceed. They were instructed to stand by, pending the completion of an inspection of their train by the Car Department. At 11:55 p.m., the crew members were informed that the Car Department had completed its inspection, and they were released to depart.

The sky was overcast, and the temperature was 38° F, with an average wind speed of 8.2 mph from the west, providing a wind chill factor of 32° F.

THE ACCIDENT

At approximately 11:57 p.m., as the Q164-18 approached the Inbound Lead Crossing, the Car Inspector was following close behind a hotel shuttle van as it passed immediately in front of the approaching Q164-18. He then drove his ATV directly into the path of the on-coming eastbound CSX freight train at a highway-rail grade crossing located within CSX's yard facility at Selkirk, New York, where he was struck and fatally injured. It does not appear that the Car Inspector made any attempt to stop at the STOP sign posted immediately before the crossing.

The employee had been operating an ATV in the performance of his assigned duties and responsibilities. The freight train, CSX Q164-18, had just begun to pull, leaving the yard to begin an assigned trip from Selkirk, New York, to South Kearney, New Jersey, when the Car Inspector drove the ATV into its path. The Car Inspector did not have sufficient time to clear the crossing, and was struck by the train. Train speed, as recorded on the lead locomotive's (CSX 612) event recorder, was 8 mph.

The ATV was completely demolished, but the lead locomotive sustained no damage, and no rail equipment was derailed. Neither train crew member sustained injuries.

The highway-rail grade crossing is located on a paved service road immediately behind the hump tower in the Selkirk Yard, and is referred to as the Inbound Lead Crossing. It is a private industrial crossing, and is equipped with STOP signs only. It is not assigned a DOT number and is not listed in the National Inventory of highway-rail grade crossings.

POST-ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

FRA's Region I Deputy Administrator, Grade Crossing Safety Program Manager, Motive Power and Equipment Safety Inspector, and one Hazardous Materials Safety Inspector responded to the accident scene in the Selkirk rail facility, Selkirk, New York, after 2 a.m. on the morning of Dec. 19, 2006.

During the investigation, the following materials and information were obtained:

- Accounts from interviews of the crew and eye witnesses;
- Event recorder data;
- Employee histories of the fatally injured Car Inspector, Locomotive Engineer, and Conductor;
- Copies of the carrier's accident and personal injury reports;
- A copy of the police report from the Bethlehem, New York Police Department; and
- Copies of information relative to the carrier's ATVs, including training and operational policies. The carrier had implemented an action plan to address highway-rail grade crossing safety issues for employees working within its rail facilities. The action plan included an intensive safety awareness campaign.

Analysis and Conclusions

Although it appeared that highway user inattention was the probable cause in this case, the accident remained under investigation at the time of this report, and any final determination would depend upon a more thorough review of the facts and circumstances.

APPLICABLE RULES

No Federal regulations or railroad operating rules appear to have been violated.