

RAILWAY OCCURRENCE REPORT

COLLISION
BETWEEN
CSX YARD ASSIGNMENT
AND

CANADIAN NATIONAL FREIGHT TRAIN NO. A-405-3A-01
MILE 17.5, CSX SARNIA SUBDIVISION
CHATHAM, ONTARIO
01 APRIL 1995

REPORT NUMBER R95S0036

The Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSB) investigated this occurrence for the purpose of advancing transportation safety. It is not the function of the Board to assign fault or determine civil or criminal liability.

Railway Occurrence Report

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Summary

On 01 April 1995, at approximately 1045 eastern standard time, a CSX Transportation Inc. (CSX) yard assignment collided with Canadian National (CN) train No. A-405-3A-01 (train 405) proceeding south on the main track at Mile 17.5 of the CSX Sarnia Subdivision in Chatham Yard. Four cars on train 405 and the CSX locomotive derailed. No one was injured.

Ce rapport est également disponible en français.

Other Factual Information

The crew of the yard assignment commenced switching operations in the yard at approximately 1030 on 01 April 1995. The crew consisted of a locomotive engineer, a foreman and a brakeman. All crew members met the rest and fitness requirements established to ensure the safe operation of trains.

The first assignment for the CSX crew had required them to collect cars from tracks Nos. 2, 3, 4 and 5 then switch them out for delivery to industry. They had coupled onto a total of 11 cars from tracks Nos. 2, 3 and 4. The locomotive was orientated with the short hood facing south.

The conductor then advised the locomotive engineer to back north pulling cars out of track No. 4 and stop clear of the main track, approximately 800 feet northward. He then walked to the cars in track No. 5 which they would be coupling onto next. The brakeman, anticipating the arrival of train 405, lined the main track switch to normal, and positioned himself to inspect the approaching train.

Train 405 was travelling on the main track within yard limits at approximately 10 mph under authority of an Occupancy Control System (OCS) clearance issued by the CSX rail traffic controller located in St. Thomas. The crew of train 405 had contacted the yard assignment crew by radio to ensure that the route would be clear.

Having received and repeated the conductor's instructions, the locomotive engineer commenced movement northward at an estimated speed of 2 mph or 3 mph. The locomotive engineer, concerned about the location of the conductor, continued to look southward in the direction of the conductor's last known location and did not observe the route ahead. The brakeman inspecting the CN train observed that the yard assignment was approaching too close and radioed for him to stop. The locomotive engineer immediately initiated an emergency brake application but struck the side of the CN train. The 16th through 19th cars on the CN train derailed along with the CSX locomotive. All the derailed equipment remained upright but damaged.

Analysis

Train 405 had been cleared to pass through Chatham on the main track within yard limits and was operating as required.

The CSX locomotive engineer understood that he was to stop clear of the main track for train 405. However, he had concentrated his attention on the location of the conductor, and was moving the train without observing ahead or having made arrangements for the brakeman to direct the movement. Although the orientation of the locomotive (long hood leading) would have impaired his ability to see forward, this situation is not viewed as a

¹ All times are eastern standard time (Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) minus five hours) unless otherwise stated.

cause or a contributing factor to the accident. The CSX locomotive engineer inadvertently fouled the main track and struck the passing CN train.

Findings

1. Train 405 was passing through Chatham on the main track within yard limits in accordance with requirements.
2. The CSX locomotive engineer was aware of the CN southward movement.
3. The CSX locomotive engineer focused his attention on the positioning of the conductor and did not observe the route ahead of the movement.

Causes and Contributing Factors

The CSX locomotive engineer inadvertently fouled the main track after inappropriately focusing his attention on the location of the conductor instead of the route ahead.

This report concludes the Transportation Safety Board's investigation into this occurrence. Consequently, the Board, consisting of Chairperson, John W. Stants, and members Zita Brunet and Maurice Harquail, authorized the release of this report on 17 January 1996.