



ASSESSMENT OF THE RESPONSE TO RAIL SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS R00-02 – R98C0022

BACKGROUND

On 01 March 1998, at approximately 1531 mountain standard time, Canadian National (CN) train No. A-447-51-01 (train 447) collided with the rear end of stationary CN train No. C-771-51-28 (train 771) at Mile 165.4 of the CN Edson Subdivision, near Obed, Alberta. The two crew members in the lead locomotive on train 447 were seriously injured and taken from the scene by ambulance. The last car from train 771 and the lead locomotive from train 447 derailed and both sustained extensive damage. There were no dangerous goods involved.

The Board determined that the rear-end collision occurred when the crew of train 447, which was being operated under the assumption that train 771 was at least 1.5 miles further ahead, did not maintain adequate vigilance, resulting in the rear of train 771 not being noticed in sufficient time to bring the train to a stop. The assumption that train 771 was further ahead was based on the interpretation of an automated voice transmission provided by a Wayside Inspection System (WIS). Contributing to this accident were a lack of accurate information regarding the location of train 771, an inadequate dissemination of information regarding the nature of WIS broadcasts to operating crews, and poor visual conspicuity of the rear of train 771.

In consideration of the facts of this occurrence the Board recommended that:

The Department of Transport ensure that an assessment is made of the technologies designed for the safe separation of railway rolling stock movements, with the intent of establishing a minimum safety standard.

R00-02

Transport Canada's Response to TSB Recommendation R00-02 (March 2000)

In his response, the Minister fully accepted both recommendations. Transport Canada (TC) is conducting research on new train control technologies in three phases. The first phase of comprehensively reviewing and analysing current technological developments and implementation of new technologies is completed and published in a TC report, (TP 13105E). The second phase of assessing the identified technologies and their impact on the safety of railway operations is in progress. The third phase will focus on the impact of technology on existing standards, rules and regulations with the intent of establishing a minimum safety standard for new technology. TC is also participating in the development of new standards for Positive Train Control (PTC) and Communications-Based Train Control (CBTC) systems.
(R00-02)

Board Assessment of Response to R00-02(September 2000)

Although the effectiveness of the Board's recommendation cannot be ascertained until the technologies designed for the safe separation of trains are implemented, the Board is satisfied with the extent of TC's involvement in the technology projects. Therefore the response to Recommendation R00-02 is assessed as "*Fully Satisfactory*".