



## REASSESSMENT OF THE RESPONSE TO RAIL SAFETY RECOMMENDATION R09-02

### Emergency contact signage at railway crossings

#### Background

On 17 December 2007, at approximately 1549 eastern standard time, VIA Rail Canada Inc. (VIA) passenger train No. 35, travelling westward at 62 mph on the south main track of Canadian National's Kingston Subdivision, struck an empty tractor-trailer that was immobilized on the 3<sup>e</sup> Avenue level public crossing located at Mile 23.57, near Pincourt/Terrasse-Vaudreuil, Quebec. The tractor-trailer was destroyed; the locomotive was damaged and was unable to continue. Subsequently, 76 passengers were transferred to another VIA train and rail traffic was delayed for up to 3 ½ hours. The truck driver sustained minor injuries. There was no derailment and no track damage.

In this and several other crossing accidents on the Kingston Subdivision, trucks were immobilized on a crossing for a period of time before the arrival of the train, yet the drivers did not notice the posted railway emergency contact information and made no attempt to place an emergency call. This demonstrates that, even though the industry initiative to post emergency contact information at crossings has been a positive step in advancing crossing safety, it has shortcomings due to driver awareness and signage conspicuity, both of which are critical to reducing the number of grade crossing accidents. To raise driver awareness, Operation Lifesaver and Direction 2006 have developed vehicle driver training material for crossing safety and disseminated it throughout the country. The material includes guidance on the presence and location of emergency contact information at railway crossings, but it has not yet been incorporated into all provincial driver training manuals. Consequently, many drivers remain uninformed.

While it is incumbent upon vehicle drivers to be aware of the available information, railways also have a responsibility to ensure that the information is clearly visible, compelling, and posted in a location that will be easily seen by an uninformed driver whose vehicle becomes immobilized on the track. In the United States, the *Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD) provides guidance for standardizing emergency contact information signage and its location at railway crossings. The MUTCD guidance requires signage to be large, conspicuous and use direct wording that clearly defines the risk. However, in Canada, there is no specified standard for signage size, wording or location under either current TC crossing regulations or the proposed RTD 10 crossing standard. Consequently, signage in Canada is smaller and has varied wording. As a result, there is an increased risk that uninformed drivers may not see the information and alert railways. Therefore, the Board recommends that:

Transport Canada implement standards to improve the visibility of emergency contact signage at railway crossings in Canada.

**Recommendation R09-02 du BST**

**Transport Canada's response to Recommendation R09-02 (January 2010)**

With respect to Recommendation R09-02, TC accepts the recommendation and is currently investigating the feasibility of implementing special signage for emergency contact numbers. Based on the results, TC will work at having the signage incorporated in its Technical Standards and Inspection, Testing and Maintenance Requirements (RTD 10 Draft) manual.

**Board assessment of response to Recommendation R09-02 (September 2010)**

TC has accepted the recommendation and is working at mitigating the deficiency. TC has described action which, if implemented in full, will substantially reduce or eliminate the safety deficiency. However, at present, the action has not been sufficiently advanced to reduce the risks for transportation safety.

The Board assesses the response to Recommendation R09-02 as having **Satisfactory Intent**.

**Transport Canada's response to Recommendation R09-02 (January 2012)**

Transport Canada has revised the proposed Grade Crossings Regulations and related documents to address stakeholder concerns from past consultations. A new emergency contact sign is proposed in the new version of RTD10. The proposed Grade Crossings Regulations and RTD10 external consultations will start on 30 January 2012 for a 60-day period. Stakeholder meetings will also take place in locations across Canada in May and June 2012.

**Board reassessment of the response to Recommendation R09-02 (February 2012)**

TC continues to work toward progressing the Grade Crossings Regulations and technical standards that include new emergency contact signage. However, it is not yet known when or if these regulations will be approved. The safety action has not sufficiently progressed to address the deficiency.

Therefore, the Board reassesses the response to Recommendation R09-02 to remain as having **Satisfactory Intent**.

**Transport Canada's response to Recommendation R09-02 (January 2013)**

The final round of consultations on the draft regulation was scheduled to be completed in June 2012. However, at the request of stakeholders, TC had to prolong its consultation timelines. TC expects to publish the proposed regulations in Part I of the *Canada Gazette* in April 2013 and in Part II in September 2013.

### **Board reassessment of the response to Recommendation R09-02 (March 2013)**

TC has a timeline for the proposed regulations which are anticipated to include standards to improve the visibility of emergency contact signage at railway crossings in Canada.

However, it is not yet known when or if these regulations will be approved. The safety action has not sufficiently progressed to address the deficiency.

Therefore, the Board reassesses the response to Recommendation R09-02 to remain as having **Satisfactory Intent**.

### **Transport Canada's response to Recommendation R09-02 (March 2014)**

The provision for emergency notification signage will be incorporated in the Grade Crossing Standards that form part of the Grade Crossings Regulations. It is not mandatory to integrate this requirement into the Regulations, which is why it is part of the Standards. The Grade Crossing Regulations were pre-published in the *Canada Gazette*, Part I, on 8 February 2014.

### **Board reassessment of the response to Recommendation R09-02 (April 2014)**

The proposed regulations, which include standards to improve the visibility of emergency contact signage at railway crossings in Canada, have been pre-published in the *Canada Gazette*, Part I. These standards do not come into force until the Grade Crossings Regulations are published in the *Canada Gazette*, Part II.

However, as it is not yet known when these regulations will come into force and safety action has not sufficiently progressed to address the deficiency, the Board reassesses the response to Recommendation R09-02 to remain as having **Satisfactory Intent**.

### **Transport Canada's response to Recommendation R09-02 (February 2015)**

The provisions for emergency notification signage are incorporated in the *Grade Crossings Regulations* (GCR) that came into effect December 17, 2014. Section 63 of the GCR mandates the installation of Emergency Notification signage. The parameters for legibility and orientation of the Emergency Notification signage are referenced in Section 8.5 of the Grade Crossings Standards.

The major Canadian railways have already initiated improvements to their emergency contact signage so that at many locations the signage is in compliance with the new standards.

### **Board reassessment of the response to Recommendation R09-02 (March 2015)**

Transport Canada has developed standards to improve the visibility of emergency contact signage at railway crossings in Canada. These standards came into force with the *Grade Crossings Regulations*. Railways have been installing new emergency contact signage that are in compliance with the Grade Crossings Standards.

As the risk has been substantially reduced, the response to the recommendation is considered to be **Fully Satisfactory**.

**Next TSB action**

This deficiency file is **Closed**.