Federal Railroad Administration
Office of Safety
Headquarters Assigned
Accident Investigation Report
HQ-2006-50

Amtrak
Boutte, LA
June 14, 2006

Note that 49 U.S.C. §20903 provides that no part of an accident or incident report made by the Secretary of Transportation/Federal Railroad Administration under 49 U.S.C. §20902 may be used in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION

FRA FACTUAL RAILROAD ACCIDENT REPORT

FRA File # HQ-2006-50

1.Name of Railroad Operating Train #1: Amtrak [ATK]	1a. Alphabetic Code: ATK	1b. Railroad Accident/Incident No.: 101028
2.Name of Railroad Operating Train #2: N/A	2a. Alphabetic Code: N/A	2b. Railroad Accident/Incident: N/A
3.Name of Railroad Responsible for Track Maintenance: Amtrak [ATK]	3a. Alphabetic Code: ATK	3b. Railroad Accident/Incident No.: N/A
4. U.S. DOT_AAR Grade Crossing Identification Number: 758008B	5. Date of Accident/Incident: Month 06 / Day 14 / Year 2006	6. Time of Accident/Incident: 12:55: ☐ AM ☑ PM

7. Type of Accident/Indicent (single entry in code box): 1. Derailment; 2. Head on collision; 3. Rear end collision; 4. Side collision; 5. Raking collision; 6. Broken Train collision; 7. Hwy-rail crossing; 8. RR grade crossing; 9. Obstruction; 10. Explosion-detonation; 11. Fire/violent rupture; 12. Other impacts; 13. Other (describe in narrative): 07

8. Cars Carrying HAZMAT	9. HAZMAT Cars Damaged/Derailed	10. Cars Releasing HAZMAT	11. People Evacuated	12. Division
0	0	0	0	SOU

13. Nearest City/Town	14. Milepost (to nearest tenth)	15. State Abbr	15. State Code	16. County
Boutte	27.9	N/A	LA	ST CHARLES

17. Temperature (F) (specify if minus)	18. Visibility (single entry) 1. Dawn 2. Day 3.Dusk 4.Dark	Code	19. Weather (single entry) 1. Clear 2. Cloudy 3. Rain 4. Fog 5.Sleet 6.Snow	Code	20. Type of Track 1. Main 2. Yard 3. Siding 4. Industry	Code
95 F		2		2		1

21. Track Name/Number	22. FRA Track Class (1-9, X)	Code	23. Annual Track Density (gross tons in millions)	24. Time Table Direction 1. North 3. East	Code
Single main track		4	33.1		4

OPERATING TRAIN #1

25. Type of Equipment Consist (single entry) 1. Freight train 2. Passenger train 3. Commuter train 4. Work train 5. Single car 6. Cut of cars 7. Yard/switching 8. Light loco(s). 9. Maint./inspect.car	A. Spec. MoW Equip. Code	26. Was Equipment Attended? 1. Yes 2. No	Code	27. Train Number/Symbol
	2	1. Yes	1	1

28. Speed (recorded speed, if available) R - Recorded E - Estimated	Code	30. Method(s) of Operation (enter code(s) that apply)	30a. Remotely Controlled Locomotive?
69 MPH	R	a. ATCS; b. Auto train control; c. Auto train stop; d. Cab; e. Traffic; f. Interlocking; g. Automatic block; h. Current of traffic; i. Time table/train orders; j.Track warrant control; k. Direct traffic control; l.Yard limits; m.Special instructions; n. Other than main track; o. Positive train control; p. Other (Specify in narrative) Code(s): g, j, N/A, N/A, N/A	0 = Not a remotely controlled; 1 = Remote control portable; 2 = Remote control tower; 3 = Remote control transmitter - more than one remote control transmitter: 0

29. Trailing Tons (gross tonnage, excluding power units): 0

	a. Initial and Number	b. Position in Train	c. Loaded (yes/no)
(1) First involved (derailed, struck, etc)	N/A	1	N/A
(2) Causing (if mechanical cause reported)	0	0	N/A

32. If railroad employee(s) tested for drug/alcohol use, enter the number that were positive in the appropriate box.

Alcohol	Drugs
0	0

33. Was this consist transporting passengers? (Y/N): Y

34. Locomotive Units	a. Head End	Mid Train b. Manual	Mid Train c. Remote	Rear End d. Manual	Rear End c. Remote
(1) Total in Train	2	0	0	0	0
(2) Total Derailed	0	0	0	0	0

35. Cars	Loade a. Freight	Loade b. Pass.	Empty c. Freight	Empty d. Pass.	e. Caboose
(1) Total in Equipment Consist	0	6	0	0	0
(2) Total Derailed	0	0	0	0	0

36. Equipment Damage This Consist	37. Track, Signal, Way, & Structure Damage	38. Primary Cause Code	39. Contributing Cause Code
100000	0	M399	M302

Number of Crew Members 40. Engineer/ Operators	41. Firemen	42. Conductors	43. Brakemen	Length of Time on Duty 44. Engineer/Operator	45. Conductor
N/A	0	2	0	Hrs 2 Mi 25	Hrs 2 Mi 25

Casualties to:	46. Railroad Employees	47. Train Passengers	48. Other
Fatal	0	0	0
Nonfatal	N/A	4	0

49. EOT Device? 1. Yes 2. No: N/A

50. Was EOT Device Properly Armed? 1. Yes 2. No: N/A

51. Caboose Occupied by Crew? 1. Yes 2. No: N/A

OPERATING TRAIN #2

52. Type of Equipment Consist (single entry) 1. Freight train 2. Passenger train 3. Commuter train 4. Work train 5. Single car 6. Cut of cars 7. Yard/switching 8. Light loco(s). 9. Maint./inspect.car	A. Spec. MoW Equip. Code	53. Was Equipment Attended? 1. Yes 2. No	Code	54. Train Number/Symbol
	N/A	1. Yes	N/A	N/A

55. Speed (recorded speed, if available) R - Recorded E - Estimated	Code	57. Method(s) of Operation (enter code(s) that apply)	57a. Remotely Controlled Locomotive?
0 MPH	N/A	a. ATCS; b. Auto train control; g. Automatic block; h. Current of traffic; m.Special instructions; n. Other than main track	0 = Not a remotely controlled; 1 = Remote control portable

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56. Trailing Tons (gross tonnage, excluding power units)	c. Auto train stop d. Cab e. Traffic f. Interlocking	i. Time table/train orders j.Track warrant control k. Direct traffic control l.Yard limits	o. Positive train control p. Other (Specify in narrative) Code(s)	2 = Remote control tower 3 = Remote control transmitter - more than one remote control transmitter
0			N/A N/A N/A N/A N/A	N/A

58. Principal Car/Unit	a. Initial and Number	b. Position in Train	c. Loaded (yes/no)
(1) First involved (derailed, struck, etc)	0	0	N/A
(2) Causing (if mechanical cause reported)	0	0	N/A

59. If railroad employee(s) tested for drug/alcohol use, enter the number that were positive in the appropriate box.

Alcohol	Drugs
0	0

60. Was this consist transporting passengers? (Y/N) N/A

61. Locomotive Units	a. Head End	Mid Train b. Manual	Mid Train c. Remote	Rear End d. Manual	Rear End c. Remote
(1) Total in Train	0	0	0	0	0
(2) Total Derailed	0	0	0	0	0

62. Cars	Loade a. Freight	Loade b. Pass.	Empty c. Freight	Empty d. Pass.	e. Caboose
(1) Total in Equipment Consist	0	0	0	0	0
(2) Total Derailed	0	0	0	0	0

63. Equipment Damage This Consist: 0

64. Track, Signal, Way, & Structure Damage: 0

65. Primary Cause Code: N/A

66. Contributing Cause Code: N/A

Number of Crew Members

67. Engineer/ Operators	68. Firemen	69. Conductors	70. Brakemen
0	0	0	0

Length of Time on Duty

71. Engineer/Operator	72. Conductor
Hrs 0 Mi 0	Hrs 0 Mi 0

Casualties to:	73. Railroad Employees	74. Train Passengers	75. Other
Fatal	0	0	0
Nonfatal	0	0	0

76. EOT Device? 1. Yes 2. No N/A

77. Was EOT Device Properly Armed? 1. Yes 2. No N/A

78. Caboose Occupied by Crew? 1. Yes 2. No N/A

Highway User Involved

79. Type — Code: C
C. Truck-Trailer. F. Bus J. Other Motor Vehicle
A. Auto D. Pick-Up Truck G. School Bus K. Pedestrian
B. Truck E. Van H. Motorcycle M. Other (spec. in narrative)

80. Vehicle Speed (est. MPH at impact): 10

81. Direction geographical) — Code: 2
1.North 2.South 3.East 4.West

82. Position — Code: 3
1.Stalled on Crossing 2.Stopped on Crossing 3.Moving Over Crossing
4. Trapped

86a. Was the highway user and/or rail equipment involved in the impact transporting hazardous materials? — Code: 4
1. Highway User 2. Rail Equipment 3. Both 4. Neither

Rail Equipment Involved

83. Equipment — Code: 1
1.Train(units pulling) 3.Train (standing) 6.Light Loco(s) (moving)
2.Train(units pushing) 4.Car(s) (moving) 7.Light(s) (standing)
5.Car(s) (standing) 8.Other (specify in narrative)

84. Position of Car Unit in Train: 1

85. Circumstance — Code: 1
1. Rail Equipment Struck Highway User
2. Rail Equipment Struck by Highway User

86b. Was there a hazardous materials release by — Code: 4
1. Highway User 2. Rail Equipment 3. Both 4. Neither

86c. State here the name and quantity of the hazardous materials released, if any.
Not Applicable

87. Type of Crossing Warning	1.Gates	2.Cantilever FLS	3.Standard FLS	4.Wig Wags	5.Hwy. traffic signals	6.Audible	7.Crossbucks	8.Stop signs	9.Watchman	10.Flagged by crew	11.Other (spec. in narr.)	12.None
Code(s)	08	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A					

88. Signaled Crossing Warning (See instructions for codes) — Code: N/A

89. Whistle Ban — Code: 2
1. Yes
2. No
3. Unknown

90. Location of Warning — Code: 1
1. Both Sides
2. Side of Vehicle Approach
3. Opposite Side of Vehicle Approach

91. Crossing Warning Interconnected with Highway Signals — Code: N/A
1. Yes
2. No
3. Unknown

92. Crossing Illuminated by Street Lights or Special Lights — Code: 2
1. Yes
2. No
3. Unknown

93. Driver's Age: 22

94. Driver's Gender — Code: 1
1. Male
2. Female

95. Driver Drove Behind or in Front of Train and Struck or was Struck by Second Train — Code: 2
1. Yes 2. No 3. Unknown

96. Driver — Code: 2
1. Drove around or thru the Gate
2. Stopped and then Proceeded
3. Did not Stop
4. Stopped on Crossing
5. Other (specify in narrative)

97. Driver Passed Standing Highway Vehicle — Code: 2
1. Yes 2. No 3. Unknown

98. View of Track Obscured by (primary obstruction) — Code: 8
1. Permanent Structure
2. Standing Railroad Equipment
3. Passing Train
4. Topography
5. Vegetation
6. Highway Vehicle
7. Other (specify in narrative)
8. Not obstructed

101. Casulties to Highway-Rail Crossing Users	Killed	Injured
	0	0

99. Driver Was — Code: 3
1. Killed 2.Injured 3. Uninjured

100. Was Driver in the Vehicle? — Code: 1
1. Yes 2. No

102. Highway Vehicle Property Damage (est. dollar damage): 1176 5

103. Total Number of Highway-Rail Crossing Users (include driver): 1

104. Locomotive Auxiliary Lights? — Code: 1
1. Yes 2. No

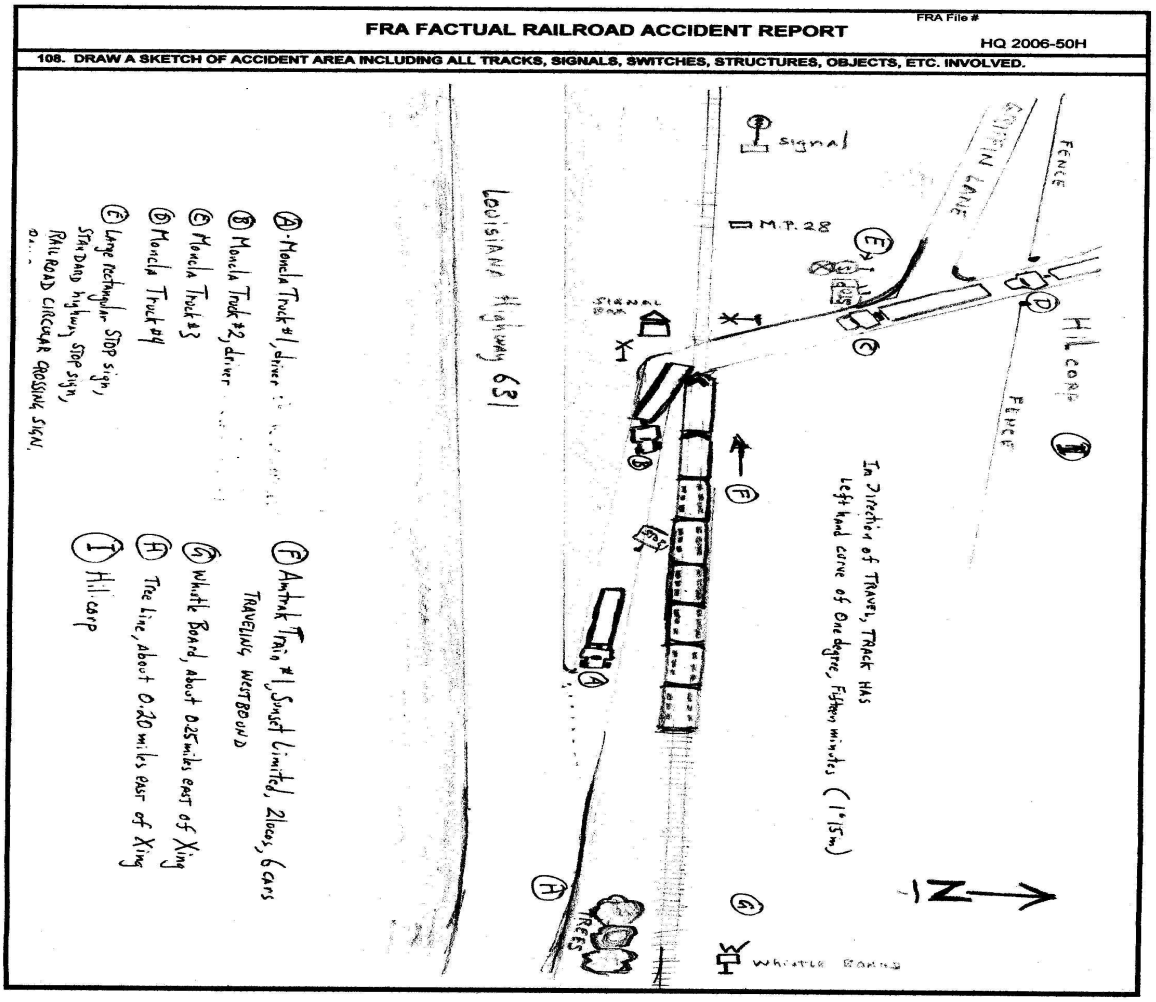
105. Locomotive Auxiliary Lights Operational? — Code: 1
1. Yes 2. No

106. Locomotive Headlight Illuminated? — Code: 1
1. Yes 2. No

107. Locomotive Audible Warning Sounded? — Code: 1
1. Yes 2. No

108. DRAW A SKETCH OF ACCIDENT AREA INCLUDING ALL TRACKS, SIGNALS, SWITCHES, STRUCTURES, OBJECTS, ETC., INVOLVED.

HQ-50-2006.jpg



109. SYNOPSIS OF THE ACCIDENT

The westbound Amtrak Sunset Limited passenger train collided with a tractor trailer truck at a private highway-rail grade crossing on June 14, 2006, at 12:55 p.m. The accident occurred near Paradis, Louisiana, immediately west of Boutte, Louisiana, near BNSF milepost 28, on the BNSF Lafayette Subdivision.

The driver of the tractor trailer truck was uninjured. The flat bed trailer and its load were damaged. The train crew reported no injuries at the time of the accident, but twelve days later the engineer visited his doctor for medical care for back pains.. The leading locomotive sustained damages of about $55,000, total damages estimated at $100,000 . Two passengers on the train were hospitalized with minor injuries at a nearby hospital, and two additional passengers later identified themselves as injured.

At the time of the accident it was daylight and partly cloudy. The temperature was 95 degrees Fahrenheit.

The accident was caused by failure of the tractor trailer truck driver to yield to the train due to driver inattentiveness. According to the St Charles Parish Sheriff's Department, the driver was cited for reckless operation of a motor vehicle and "certain vehicles must stop for all railroad crossings due to hauling hazardous materials."

110. NARRATIVE

Circumstances prior to the Accident:

The crew of Amtrak train #1, the Sunset Limited, included a locomotive engineer, an assistant locomotive engineer, a conductor, and an assistant conductor. They first went on duty at 10:30 am CDT June 14, 2006, at the Amtrak office located in the New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal, New Orleans, Louisiana. This was the home terminal of all crew members and all received more than the statutory off duty period prior to reporting for duty.

Their assigned train consisted of two locomotives and six passenger cars. The train was scheduled to travel to Los Angeles, California, with numerous station stops en route. The train received an initial terminal train air brake test and departed New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal on time at 11:50 am.

As the westbound train approached the accident area, the locomotive engineer was seated at the controls on the north side of the leading locomotive. The assistant engineer was seated on the south side, and the conductor and assistant conductor were seated in the crew car.

In this area of the railroad there is, in succession, a 0 degree 57 minute left hand curve of approximately 0.4 miles length, followed by a tangent of 1.4 miles length, followed by a 1 degree 15 minute left hand curve approximately 0.2 miles to the point of the accident, and continuing 1.3 miles beyond. The grade is level or very close to level.

The railroad timetable direction of the train was west. The geographic direction was west. Timetable directions are used throughout this report unless otherwise noted.

The Accident :

The train was being operated at 69 mph approaching the accident area. The train crew's view of the crossing was unobstructed. The engineer said he saw a tractor trailer truck passing over the approaching grade crossing, and began sounding the train air horn at 12:55, in advance of the train whistle board for this crossing. According to the engineer this tractor trailer truck cleared the crossing but was followed immediately by a second tractor trailer truck over the crossing. The engineer initiated an emergency train air brake application at 12:55 and warned the assistant engineer of the impending collision. The train had slowed to 66 mph at the time of the collision. The maximum authorized speed for this train was 70 mph as designated in the current BNSF timetable # 5 dated June 8, 2003..

Highway Vehicle:

The tractor trailer truck involved in the collision was traveling from north to south on Griffin Lane. This vehicle was the second of four vehicles departing an adjacent industrial facility on the north side of the railroad right of way. The vehicles then approached and crossed the private highway rail grade crossing. A report filed by the sheriff's office estimated the driver's speed as 10 mph at the time of the collision. There was no posted speed limit. The driver estimated his speed as between 5 and 10 mph at the time of the collision.

The train struck the left rear side of the tractor trailer truck near the rear axle. The tractor was pushed about 40 feet and the pump equipment on the trailer flat bed was knocked off and onto adjacent Louisiana Highway 631. The train came to a stop about 0.2 miles west of the collision point.

After the train stopped, the conductor went through the train to check condition of passengers. The assistant conductor followed him out of the train and both went back to the grade crossing. The conductor spoke to the police officer responding to the scene, and the assistant conductor spoke with an employee of the nearby gas plant, who informed him that the sheriff's office and emergency medical services were called; he then spoke to the police officer at the scene, and finally spoke

to the operator of the tractor trailer truck involved in the collision. The engineer and assistant engineer inspected the locomotives and remained at the head end of the train.

St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office notified an officer arrived on scene at 1:05 pm. St. Charles Hospital Guardian ambulance service contacted at 1:26 pm and arrived on scene at 1:33 pm. Paradis , Louisiana, Fire Department contacted at 1:33 pm and arrived on scene 1t 1:40 pm. Two passengers from the train were brought by ambulance to St Charles Hospital in Luling, Louisiana, and were released within 48 hours.

The lading on the tractor trailer truck consisted of pump equipment, and the pump included a fuel tank containing about 100 gallons of diesel fuel. This fuel was spilled onto the roadway and was cleaned up by a contractor .

An Amtrak supervisor responded to the scene from New Orleans. The engineer, assistant engineer and assistant conductor were brought back to New Orleans by the Amtrak supervisor, and the conductor remained with the train , continuing westbound to his crew change location at Beaumont, Texas, where he requested to be relieved.

Analysis:

The driver of the tractor trailer truck was a twenty-two year old male. His commercial driver's license was issued to him on September 1, 2005.

This private highway - rail grade crossing is equipped with cross bucks and large red "STOP" signs. The carrier had begun installation of active warning devices at the crossing, to include lights and gates, but the installation was not completed at the time of this collision.

Approaching the crossing from the north side of the track, the driver of the tractor trailer truck had a clear field of vision exceeding one quarter mile looking towards the east, the direction from which the train approached in this collision. The grade crossing itself is about two foot higher than the roadway approaching the crossing from the north side of the track, at the location of the crossing STOP sign. The road crosses the track at about a 30 degree angle from the north to the east, and then descends from the crossing at about a 70 degree angle to the east, dropping about six foot to the intersection with the main highway.

The railroad has a whistle board placed about 0.25 mile east of the crossing. The engineer and assistant engineer stated that the whistle was sounded, and a civilian near the scene of the collision stated that he heard the whistle blowing. This was validated by analysis of the event recorder data.

No toxicological testing was conducted for members of the train crew, as one was not required.

The locomotive was equipped with a speed indicator and event recorder . The lead locomotive's headlight and ditch lights were in working condition (with exception to left front ditch light, which was destroyed in the collision), as observed by Amtrak supervisory personnel responding to the accident.

Conclusions:

The railroad crew was in full compliance with their own and all applicable Federal standards.

The operator of the highway vehicle (tractor trailer truck) failed to observe the approaching train at the location where he was required to stop his vehicle and