

NTSB Docket Item
DCA-05-MR-009
Metrolink Derailment
Glendale, California
January 26, 2005

Closeout Memorandum



**National Transportation
Safety Board**

Memorandum

Date: September 13, 2005

To: Director
Office of Railroad, Pipeline & Hazardous Materials Investigations

Through: Acting Associate Director, Railroad Division [REDACTED]

From: Ted T. Turpin, IIC

Subject: Closeout Accident Investigation Memorandum
DCA-05-MR-009
Metrolink Derailment
Glendale, California
January 26, 2005

On January 26, 2005, the NTSB launched an accident investigation team to Glendale, California to investigate a collision between a Metrolink commuter train and a highway passenger vehicle. Metrolink Commuter Train M-100-26, operating eastbound (compass south) with one locomotive and four passenger cars struck an unoccupied highway vehicle near, but not on, a public grade crossing. The train was being operated with a cab car at the front and pushed by a locomotive at the rear of the train. After striking the highway vehicle, the train derailed and collided into an unoccupied Union Pacific Railroad gravel train standing on a siding. The locomotive of the gravel train was derailed and rolled onto its side.

As a result of this collision, the Metrolink train jackknifed into passing northbound Metrolink Train 901-26 with one locomotive and three passenger cars. The locomotives and all passenger cars of both passenger trains derailed. There were 11 fatalities and approximately 180 injuries.

The accident occurred in Glendale near West Chevy Chase Drive in Los Angeles County at milepost 6.47 on the Valley Subdivision of the Metrolink Commuter System. The Glendale police department designated the area a crime scene and identified the placement of the vehicle in front of the train as a criminal action. The police arrested the driver of the highway vehicle soon after the incident.

The derailment prompted questions about the crashworthiness of passenger cars in push-pull operations, and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) initiated an analysis of this issue with the support of the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center. There are no outstanding safety recommendations on this issue.

Due to the circumstances surrounding the derailment and the FRA on-going study of push-pull operations, I recommend that this investigation be closed.

I concur:

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the signature of Robert J. Chipkevich. A vertical line extends upwards from the top center of the box, and a horizontal line extends to the right from the bottom center of the box.

Robert J. Chipkevich

9-13-05

Date