



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
Investigative Hearing

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Metrorail train 302 that encountered heavy smoke in the tunnel between the L'Enfant Plaza Station and the Potomac River Bridge on January 12, 2015

GROUP	
EXHIBIT	

Agency / Organization

Title

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of:

*
*
*
*
*
*

WMATA INCIDENT AT L'ENFANT PLAZA
STATION, WASHINGTON, D.C.
JANUARY 12, 2015

Docket No.: DCA-15-FR-004

* * * * *

Interview of: JOE PENNING

WMATA Headquarters
Jackson Graham Building
Washington, D.C.

Tuesday,
April 14, 2015

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: MICHAEL FLANIGON
Railroad Accident Investigator

The interviewee was afforded an opportunity to review this transcript for accuracy. Corrections are shown in ~~strikeout~~/underline in the text.

APPEARANCES:

MICHAEL FLANIGON, Railroad Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

RICK NARVELL, Human Performance Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

LOREN GROFF, Ph.D., Transportation Safety Analyst
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Joe Penning:	
By Mr. Flanigon	4
By Mr. Groff	17
By Mr. Narvell	20

I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. FLANIGON: My name is Mike Flanigon,
3 F-l-a-n-i-g-o-n. It's April 14th. We're at WMATA. We're
4 interviewing Mr. Joe Penning, P-e-n-n-i-n-g, who is involved in
5 electrical maintenance on the system, and I'll ask him to explain
6 a little more what he does. It's April 14th, 2015, and this is in
7 regard to the L'Enfant Plaza smoke and arc incident that occurred
8 April -- January 12th, 2015.

9 And, Mr. Penning, just to confirm, you understand we
10 record the interview and provide you a transcript.

11 MR. PENNING: Yes.

12 MR. FLANIGON: And I'll ask the other folks here with me
13 to identify themselves.

14 DR. GROFF: Loren Groff, L-o-r-e-n, G-r-o-f-f, NTSB.

15 MR. NARVELL: Rick Narvell, N, like in Nancy,
16 a-r-v, like in Victor-e-double l, with NTSB.

INTERVIEW OF JOE PENNING

17
18 BY MR. FLANIGON:

19 Q. Great, well, let's start, if you could, tell us a little
20 bit about how long you've worked for WMATA, what you actually do,
21 what your job title is, and what you're responsible for.

22 A. I've been at WMATA for 18 years, a little over 18 years,
23 18 years and 4 months. I've spent the majority of that time in
24 plant maintenance. I spent a year at MOC, and then I came back to
25 plant maintenance. I primarily, until, it's only been the last

1 couple of years that I've actually had any direct dealings with
2 the tunnel fans. Prior to that, I was on the pumping station
3 crew. I maintained the S&I Yard, Branch Avenue, the Royal Street
4 Bus Garage before it closed down, and hopefully I'm waiting on the
5 new bus garage that's being built in Lorton or at Newington. But
6 the last, I would say, maybe 3 years, I have been involved with
7 tunnel fans in our region, the Alexandria region, which stretches
8 from Springfield to the Pentagon. Well, it was Springfield to the
9 | Pentagon. Now it includes Foggy Bottom ~~further-Farragut west~~West,
10 and McPherson Square.

11 Q. And what is it that you do actually? What is your -- do
12 you have a job title?

13 A. General Equipment Mechanic AA.

14 Q. AA Equipment Mechanic, so you can maintain a variety of

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. -- electromechanical sorts of infrastructure at WMATA.

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. And that includes the tunnel fans.

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Got it. You mentioned a couple of letters, MOC, Mike,
21 Oscar, Charley. That stands for what?

22 A. Maintenance Operations Center.

23 Q. Is that the one that's in the Rail Operations Center?

24 A. Yes. It used to be downstairs here. I guess there's
25 still an office here, right? I haven't been there in a long time.

1 Most of that operation, I understand, has been moved to the Carmen
2 Turner Facility. And basically, what we do is we answer the phone
3 and generate tickets for different regions that people call in.
4 Station managers will call in; other plant folks will call in, and
5 report failures to pumping stations, things that happen in a bus
6 garage, bus lifts, S&I lifts, train lifts, virtually any type of
7 facility maintenance -- anything associated with a facility. We
8 don't specifically deal with the high-voltage portion of it. Our
9 responsibility, as I understand it, is generally from the
10 disconnect to the fan or disconnect to the air conditioning unit
11 or that type of thing.

12 Q. Well, having been here 18 years, you've seen a lot of
13 ups and downs in the WMATA organization. And certainly one of
14 the, I guess, for lack of a better term, a low point was around
15 the time of Fort Totten and a whole series of other accidents that
16 occurred around that time.

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. And so, a general question is, you know, since -- in
19 that 6, 7 years since that time, what kind of changes have you
20 seen in terms of safety at WMATA? Changes for the good? Changes
21 for the bad? Or no change?

22 A. I think most of the changes that I've seen have been to
23 the good. Sometimes, and this is just my opinion now. Sometimes
24 I think it can cause certain -- it might cause people to be overly
25 safe, maybe too cautious. I mean, that's not necessarily a bad

1 thing, but sometimes it slows things down.

2 Q. So, give me an example of being overly safe.

3 A. Well, sometimes it's just differences within two or
4 three people working on the crew. You know, one person has an
5 idea to do it one way. Another person has an idea to do it
6 another way, and then -- and you have to come to some conclusion
7 as to the best way to do it. And sometimes it takes a supervisor
8 to step in and decide what the best way to do it is.

9 Q. And that's because people are overly cautious or overly
10 concerned or --

11 A. Well, sometimes I think, yeah, I think people tend to
12 get overly cautious.

13 Q. How would you characterize your working relationship
14 with your peers?

15 A. I have a good working relationship with my whole crew.

16 Q. And how about supervisors, managers, kind of above you?

17 A. Our supervisor and our lead man, they have a good
18 working relationship with the people that we have on our crew
19 right now. I think, you know, we're all pretty confident that
20 everyone on our crew has got the back of the next guy down the
21 line, or whatever.

22 Q. Do you feel any kind of pressures to take safety
23 shortcuts --

24 A. No.

25 Q. -- to get productivity where it needs to be?

1 A. I think our productivity is where it needs to be. And,
2 no, we don't get any pressure to do any -- to take safety
3 shortcuts. As a matter of fact, when I first started doing tunnel
4 fans, I was doing those tunnel fans by myself. Then it got to the
5 point where we always had two people doing them. And it's a good
6 thing.

7 Q. Sure.

8 A. It's a good thing, because some of the places that we go
9 to, there are ladders, and it's weather like this. The ladders
10 get slippery, the stairs get slippery, and if something should
11 happen, it's a good thing to have a second person there to call
12 for help.

13 Q. Sure. Do you feel free to raise safety issues?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And are you aware of any close call reporting system or
16 near-miss reporting system that WMATA has?

17 A. I know we have a close call -- or I guess that's what
18 it's called, close call reporting system. I don't have any direct
19 involvement in it. I believe those things are reported to the
20 supervisor and I think he has access to it on the Internet
21 website, I believe.

22 Q. How about the safety hotline? Have you had any
23 experience with that?

24 A. I've never used it. I've never had to.

25 Q. Do you know what it is?

1 A. I know there is a safety hotline. I know there used to
2 be a general managers' hotline, but I don't know if that's in
3 existence anymore.

4 Q. So, as far as safety issues that come up in your day-to-
5 day work, do you feel those get addressed?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. You know, without going to hotlines and --

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. That's good. You think it's a safe place to work?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. And why do you say that?

12 A. Because I've seen it evolve over the years. I think
13 that it's become a safer place, because, I think, people tend to
14 follow the rules and some of the old-timers that used to work here
15 that have retired and gone on, I didn't -- I mean, I don't want to
16 talk bad about them, but some of them I didn't think were as
17 knowledgeable as they could be.

18 Q. Does your -- well, maybe explain before I ask this
19 question, kind of explain how the supervision structures work.
20 So, who do you report to, kind of on a daily basis, that signs
21 your work and --

22 A. I report to my supervisor.

23 Q. And that's the gentleman outside there?

24 A. No. My supervisor -- he is the -- the gentleman that
25 was over here?

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. He's a systems maintenance supervisor. My supervisor is
3 a plant maintenance supervisor, and he works in the Alexandria
4 yard, or his office -- we report to the Alexandria Rail yard.

5 Q. You mentioned a lead man also. What's a lead man?

6 A. He's mostly an administrative person.

7 Q. He's not out on the field with you?

8 A. Not all the time. Sometimes, but not all the time. Not
9 on a routine basis.

10 Q. And then going up above the supervisor, is that where
11 the assistant superintendent?

12 A. We have an assistant superintendent, and I think you're
13 talking to him this afternoon, our assistant superintendent -- my
14 assistant superintendent.

15 Q. So, do they ever come out and visit you in the field,
16 see what you're doing?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Kind of examine, you know, observe your work?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And in doing that, do they ever provide any
21 clarification or information about procedures and proper ways of
22 doing things?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And how often would you say you typically see them in
25 the field? Kind of average, you know, once a week, once a month?

1 A. A couple times a week.

2 Q. Couple times a week?

3 A. Couple times a week. Well, a couple times a week for
4 the supervisor. The assistant superintendent doesn't come out,
5 maybe a couple times a month. You know, I see him, not as often.
6 His office -- our assistant superintendent's office is in the West
7 Falls Church Yard. So, he probably sees the West Falls Church
8 crew more than he sees us, although, when I fill in as lead man --
9 I talk to him on a regular basis or he calls me on a regular
10 basis.

11 Q. In terms of training, have you received any kind of
12 training on Incident Command System, how emergencies are managed?

13 A. No. At least, not -- no, I don't think so. I don't
14 think so. Or nothing specific, at least.

15 Q. So, in an emergency, like the L'Enfant Plaza smoke
16 arcing incident, who is actually in charge when something like
17 that happens? If you know. If you don't know, that's okay.

18 A. I would have to specifically read the SOP to see that,
19 although, I believe it says that there is an on-scene commander
20 who takes charge of the whole operation. But I don't know that
21 it's a specific person. I don't know that there is any one person
22 who would, like, be -- who would respond to every emergency. I
23 don't know that for sure.

24 Q. Okay. Have you ever had the experience or the need to
25 be involved in any kind of emergency response to a problem with a

1 train in a tunnel or some smoke or fire or medical emergency or
2 anything like that?

3 A. I've had to respond to water in a tunnel several years
4 ago now, and I -- probably 10 or 12 years ago, I would guess. I
5 don't know for sure. We had a problem with a pumping station in
6 the short tunnel section in between Braddock Road and National
7 Airport. There's a short tunnel system that goes underneath Route
8 1 there, I think, in that general -- and we had enough water that
9 they had to single track, they had to move -- they had to single
10 track to the other section until we got the water down. And we
11 had to respond to that. That was myself, my supervisor, and one
12 other equipment mechanic like myself. He's retired now, but I
13 think that's probably the only time that I've actually had to
14 respond to an emergency-type situation.

15 Q. And there's an organization here in the D.C. area called
16 the Tri-state Oversight Committee. Have you heard of them or know
17 anything about them?

18 A. I've heard of them. I don't really -- I don't think
19 I've ever met any of them. I kind of have a broad idea, I guess,
20 of what they do. They're more than an investigative body as far
21 as from what I understand.

22 Q. And you haven't run across them out in the field or --

23 A. Not that I'm aware of.

24 Q. Switching gears a little bit, how would you characterize
25 the functionality of the current radio system of WMATA?

1 A. Sometimes it's good, sometimes it's bad.

2 Q. Uneven.

3 A. Yes, uneven.

4 Q. And when it's bad, what does that mean?

5 A. There's no radio -- sometimes, in certain spots, I would
6 say, the radios will just go into an out-of-range alarm.

7 Q. And when that happens, they don't work, basically?

8 A. Can't talk to anybody on them.

9 Q. Now, in the vent shaft right by where this arcing
10 occurred at L'Enfant Plaza, there is a smoke alarm in that vent
11 shaft. Is that something that you would take care of or does
12 somebody else taken care of that?

13 A. Somebody else takes care of that. I'm not sure whether
14 that would be a communications function or whether that would be a
15 -- I tend to think that it would probably be a communications
16 function, but I'm not positive about that. I don't think our fire
17 equipment folks work on those things. I think they work on more
18 of the fire extinguishers and those kinds of things.

19 Q. Do you know where an alarm's to? In other words, if it
20 alarms, do you know where that message goes, if it goes anywhere?

21 A. I think it goes to the nearest station kiosk and the
22 ROCC. I think.

23 Q. Now, there's a QA program at WMATA. Have you heard of
24 that?

25 A. QA program?

1 Q. Quality assurance, quality control?

2 A. Yeah, I've heard of it. I don't know -- I haven't
3 really had any involvement with them.

4 Q. They don't get involved in the fan maintenance or the
5 other equipment you maintain?

6 A. I think there's other -- I'm not aware -- occasionally,
7 my supervisor will get emails from, I believe, it may be a QA
8 person. But I don't think he has ever gone into any of the vent
9 shafts or tunnel fan shafts. I think he stays mostly in the
10 stations. That's been my experience. I don't think he's ever
11 reported anything on the fan shafts.

12 Q. Now, when you are doing the fan check, we've seen some
13 checklists of how that works. And one of the steps is to get the
14 controller at the ROCC to remotely exercise the fans.

15 A. Correct.

16 Q. And we've heard that in some cases, it's difficult to
17 get them to do that. Has that been your experience?

18 A. It can be difficult depending on the time of day. And
19 probably 50 other things that they might have to deal with at the
20 same time. It doesn't happen -- well, I don't get that that
21 often, because, well, when I worked in the Maintenance Operations
22 Center, I knew how it was. I only worked there for a year, but I
23 knew how it was. I didn't work on the ROCC part of it. I worked
24 in the maintenance -- in the other part of it. But I know how
25 busy it can be and I know that the best -- and I've kind of

1 figured out the best times to try and call them and get them to
2 exercise the fans. And that's generally how I try and do it,
3 unless we have -- unless we get pushed outside of that envelope by
4 some other circumstances or whatever.

5 Q. And are the maintenance checks on the fans, are they
6 pretty much done on the day shift or could be any shift?

7 A. It's on the day shift.

8 Q. Day shift. And depending on the time of day, I guess,
9 you're referring to rush hour and --

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. -- and maybe other things that might be going on.

12 A. I know when we did the system-wide testing, after the
13 incident at L'Enfant; we were limited from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
14 And that's generally what we're limited to on a regular basis,
15 because 10:00 a.m. is after rush hour, and at 2:00 p.m., that's
16 when the ROCC controllers are changing over from one crew to
17 another crew. Plus it's starting to gear up for rush hour at the
18 same time. So, it's been my experience, if we keep it within the
19 10:00 to 2:00 window, you're generally okay. And if you can avoid
20 from 11:00 to 12:00, because I think that's when -- generally they
21 have two people on the desk, and I'm not sure, but possibly
22 between 11:00 and 12:00, one of them goes to lunch for a half
23 hour, comes back, then the other one takes their lunch for a half
24 hour. So, there's -- I don't know this for sure, but I think
25 there's only one person on the desk at that time.

1 Q. So, that's kind of the tactic that you've developed?

2 A. I try and avoid that hour. I do other things, take my
3 own lunch or I do other things that I can do without contacting
4 the ROCC during that hour.

5 Q. And is that something you individually just sort of,
6 through your experience, worked up or is that something everybody
7 does or --

8 A. No, that's just me.

9 Q. Just me.

10 A. That's just me. That's what I do.

11 Q. So, when you're assigned fans, what's kind of the
12 expected production? What do they expect you to do? I mean, how
13 long did it take? How many fans in a day? That sort of thing.

14 A. I mean, if we do, realistically, two fans in a day, I
15 would think.

16 Q. So, that's an array of fans.

17 A. Right.

18 Q. There might be three or four fans --

19 A. A fan shaft can have anywhere from two fans -- we have
20 one that has two fans, and we have one that has six fans, I think,
21 or five fans. And then, again, it depends on whether it's an
22 annual PM or whether it's a monthly PM, because an annual PM,
23 we're required to inspect the fan blades and check and make sure
24 that they're tight. Some are easier than others, because there is
25 an access that you can reach and grab. On other ones, there is no

1 access and you have to take that whole front --

2 Q. Disassemble it.

3 A. -- screen off of it in order to access, you know, check
4 for tightness and that kind of thing.

5 Q. And so, do you have any trouble meeting that goal?

6 A. Generally, no. I mean, it depends on the work load.
7 And it depends on, sometimes, what my supervisor has me doing on a
8 day-to-day basis. I probably -- I don't know. I probably fill in
9 and help other people a little bit more than other people do. And
10 so, I get involved a little bit more.

11 And sometimes, it gets towards the end of the month and
12 we have to rush a little bit to do the monthly P- -- do them, but
13 generally, it's not a real problem. I think the worst time of
14 year is the winter time when we have a lot of snow, because we
15 also have that responsibility. And when we're clearing stations
16 of snow, then we don't do anything else. We might do emergency
17 tickets, but -- or anything that might constitute an emergency,
18 but other than that, we generally concentrate solely on the snow
19 part of it.

20 MR. FLANIGON: That's all I had. I'll ask my colleague
21 over there if he has any more.

22 BY DR. GROFF:

23 Q. This is Loren Groff, NTSB, for the recording. I
24 actually just want to follow up on a couple things that Mike was
25 talking about. Just to help me understand just the way, sort of

1 work with the sign and the way you do your work. Do you have,
2 like, do you get job tickets that you have to complete or do you
3 have -- you know you have to get through all the fans by the end
4 of the month? Or how does that actually work?

5 A. Well, we -- at the beginning of each month, we have a PM
6 list that's generated that lists all the fans and all the
7 preventive maintenance tickets that we have to do for that month.
8 In addition, we have what, I guess, what is commonly called the
9 backlog report or the backlogs, which are individual tickets that
10 are generated -- could be generated on a daily basis by people
11 calling the MOC generating a ticket, and we also have those to
12 respond to and complete or do whatever we need to do with them.

13 Q. So the -- it's kind of the routine -- that your
14 preventive maintenance or PM list is kind of your routine stuff
15 you know is going to have to do, and then you've got to fit in
16 things that are broken or malfunctioning and have been reported.

17 A. Right.

18 Q. Is that up to you or who decides when that work all gets
19 sort of fit in? Who builds that schedule?

20 A. The supervisor does that.

21 Q. So then, you said snow removal, you have to -- you add
22 that into the mix. Then I'd say -- I imagine it's gets pretty
23 busy in the wintertime. Like, this year, we had a lot of snow.

24 A. It was very -- well, it was very busy. Especially, I
25 guess, January and February, right, was pretty busy.

1 Q. Then, with those, like the tests of the fans and
2 everything, you said that to call the ROCC, you kind of know the
3 times that they work. Do you think your co-workers kind of know
4 that, too, over time, when's a good time to call if they've got to
5 exercise the fans?

6 A. I think they're getting into the same routine that I am.
7 I think they pretty much understand the --

8 Q. Just over time, you figure it out?

9 A. Just over time, I think you just kind of figure it out.
10 I don't know -- I can't speak for all the rest of the regions. I
11 can only speak for my own region.

12 Q. Sure. The interesting -- I guess where I'm going with
13 the questioning is that if you've got all that work to do, do you
14 have the opportunity always to be able to adjust -- you got to
15 exercise the fans, do you have the opportunity to be able to
16 adjust your schedule to get them to exercise the fans when it
17 works. And you got all that -- if it gets busy, do you always
18 have a chance to work around them or do you have other options, if
19 you can't?

20 A. About the only -- well, I have gotten them to test
21 tunnel fans in that hour that they generally use for lunch. And,
22 yeah, I do do that, if I have to. I just -- I may try and make
23 the effort to avoid it, if I can.

24 Q. Is it the kind of thing where they come back and say,
25 we're too busy right now?

1 A. Sometimes they will, yeah. Sometimes. Sometimes we get
2 put on hold and we'll have to wait on hold for a while or
3 whatever.

4 Q. And if I understand right, you have -- do you have the
5 ability to test and do them while you're standing there, too, if
6 you can't get them to do it, is that possible or not?

7 A. We can operate them remotely, but I don't know. Or no,
8 we can operate them locally. We can't operate them remotely.

9 Q. So, you -- so it doesn't qualify as the check. You have
10 to do a remote check or if you were forced to, could you do a
11 local?

12 A. Well, we do a local, anyway. We operate them -- we do
13 both.

14 Q. Okay. Thank you, that's helpful.

15 A. It's my belief that the most important part of the whole
16 PM is making sure that ROCC can operate them remotely, because the
17 tunnel fans are not manned 24 hours a day. And there's not -- I
18 mean, we only have a skeleton crew on evening shift and the night
19 shift. And so, it's just my opinion or my belief, that that's
20 probably the most important thing is to make sure they can operate
21 them remotely for the simple fact that they're not manned 24 hours
22 a day.

23 DR. GROFF: Well, thank you. That's helps me.

24 BY MR. NARVELL:

25 Q. Just a couple. This is Rick Narvell, NTSB. Joe, you've

1 been here 18 years and some change, right, as well?

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 Q. In your time here, and we'll start back and we'll work
4 up to the kind of present date, what kind of safety issues and
5 concerns have you see in your job?

6 A. I think probably, when I first came here, we had no --
7 we had virtually no roadway protection training, the proper
8 procedure to go out onto the tracks and, you know, walk the track
9 from Point A to Point B. It was -- well, the training was just --
10 what little training there was, was just done by supervisors and
11 senior people who had been there for a while. That is -- that was
12 the most concerning thing that I had, that I ran into when I first
13 got here. It concerns -- as I look back on it, it -- that's just
14 the way things were done then. And I, you know, I guess I didn't
15 think it was a very smart thing at the time, but that's the way it
16 was done. I mean, I had just retired from the Army, and it was --
17 I guess it was hard for me to adapt from Army life to the way
18 thing in Metro -- the way people did things in Metro at the time.
19 And there wasn't a whole lot of training, really. It was mostly
20 on-the-job training and some of it I don't think was all that
21 great.

22 Q. And I'm going to assume that has gotten better?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Since you're in more structure and procedures and
25 protocols and so on and so forth.

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. How about, we'll say, modern day, the last few years.
3 What do you see out there that caused you heartache or concern
4 from a safety perspective, if anything?

5 A. I think the occasional radio failure, and sometimes I'm
6 not sure if it's a specific radio or if it's just -- if it's just
7 a specific radio or a specific area that it occurs in. Other than
8 that, we have probably become overall safer as a company. I mean,
9 it's been a good thing, at least I think it's been a good thing.
10 I think we've made a lot of progress. And I think -- and all
11 these accidents have been unfortunate and, I mean, some of -- how
12 some of these things happen just kind of amazes me sometimes.

13 I mean, I don't know everything that goes on in Metro
14 all the time. I only see a little picture of it. You know, I
15 can't really -- it's difficult for me to talk about -- I mean, I
16 can talk in broad perspective of how I see things, and I think
17 we've become safer.

18 Q. Well, that leads me into the next area of questioning
19 here, radios. You've mentioned that there are problems with
20 radios, good days and bad days, essentially. Is there any kind of
21 a backup system that WMATA has or -- and/or that you use on your
22 own when those situations occur, like a redundant type of a Plan
23 B, if you will?

24 A. We either -- I think we actually -- the only one time
25 that I really had to do anything differently was, we had a radio

1 failure and we had two radios, and neither one of them would work.
2 And I went so far as to climb up the ladder to a hatch and open up
3 a hatch and try and get it to work up there, and I couldn't get it
4 to work anywhere. So, part of the -- my understanding of part of
5 the roadway protection thing -- roadway protection is if you have
6 a complete radio failure, complete communications failure, try
7 your cell phone. And that's what I did. We were in a tunnel. We
8 had tested a tunnel fan. We had a complete radio failure and I
9 called ROCC on my cell phone and asked for foul time to walk from
10 where we were on the tunnel fans back to the exit to the tunnel.
11 And their question was, well, how am I going to know whether
12 you're clear of the tracks? Well, I'll call you back on my cell
13 phone when I get out.

14 Q. You got your foul time and you gave it back, then?

15 A. This was a very short walk. It wasn't -- short at all,
16 but without a radio, you don't know what's going on, on the rail
17 at all. And a cell phone's not going to do you any good, so I
18 called ROCC, asked for foul time, and they granted it and we
19 walked out. Then I called them back and told them that we were
20 clear.

21 Q. How often have you had to use, in this case, a cell
22 phone, as a backup?

23 A. Just that one time.

24 Q. Only one time.

25 A. Only one time.

1 Q. Safety committees, are there any safety committees here
2 at WMATA that you're aware of? If so, can you tell us what's out
3 there?

4 A. We have a -- every morning, we have what we call -- I
5 guess what it's called -- I think maybe I kind of made this up.
6 Or this is what I call -- I called it toolbox safety meeting.
7 Every morning we have a meeting and we review the safety rule of
8 the day. And then, that's where, generally, the assignments are
9 passed out and that kind of thing.

10 The supervisor has a -- there is a local safety
11 committee in the yard, and he has to go to that meeting once a
12 month. He also attends -- the assistant superintendent has his
13 safety meeting once a month. Our own crew has our own safety
14 meeting once a month that's just specifically safety. It's not
15 the morning meeting. So, we have that in addition.

16 There's the local, there's the assistant
17 superintendent's safety meeting, and then there's -- plant
18 maintenance has a safety meeting at Carmen Turner once a month.

19 Q. Just a couple more and I'll be done here. When you go
20 out, do you do job briefings for your crew before you start a job.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Every time?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And just briefly, tell us what the job briefing consists
25 of here at WMATA.

1 A. Well, you know, we talk about where we're going, what
2 we're going to be doing, whether we need fall protection, because
3 we're on ladders. We talk about whether we need dust masks,
4 because fan shafts and vent shafts are horribly dusty.

5 Q. I can't imagine.

6 (Laughter.)

7 A. And, I mean, you know, we talk -- we make sure we have
8 gloves and flashlights and that kind of thing. Mostly, it's just
9 a -- well, what I do, I suppose, it's just more of a general
10 safety briefing type of thing about fall protection, tripping
11 hazards, slippery ladders, if we're going up and down a ladder,
12 because some of the fan shafts are only accessed by a metal
13 ladder. And if it's raining like this, all the rungs are wet and
14 slippery.

15 Q. Right. Is there a form that everybody on the crew signs
16 off on?

17 A. No, we don't do that on a -- we don't do that within our
18 general crew as far as specific jobs. We do that -- we just -- we
19 do that when we escort contractors, we have a form that we go over
20 and have all the contractors sign.

21 Q. So, when they come on the property for a job, you have
22 to have a form for them.

23 A. Right. We have a form for them, and there's a non-
24 roadway form and a roadway form. And there's no actual form that
25 we -- well, I guess, unless we have to go on the roadway. Then

1 there's a form that we use. And that's really -- that's
2 specifically for the roadway portion, when we're walking from
3 Point A to Point B. That doesn't necessarily consist of what
4 we're doing at a tunnel thing or a pumping station or vent shaft
5 or whatever. That pretty much covers the walking on the roadway
6 on the catwalk from Point A to Point B.

7 Q. Part (indiscernible), basically.

8 A. Right. That's part of that.

9 Q. Last question for me is, and if you don't know, you
10 don't know. Have any idea how many fans there are throughout the
11 entire WMATA system, just a ballpark figure?

12 A. No, I don't --

13 Q. How about in your section, your territory? Any idea?

14 A. We have 10 fan shafts. As far as counting up the fans.

15 Q. That's okay; I'm trying to just get a ballpark from --
16 at least in your territory, roughly.

17 A. We have 10 fan shafts.

18 Q. Okay, thank you.

19 A. They range from -- some of them have two fans. Some of
20 them have five and six fans.

21 Q. So at a minimum, you have probably about a minimum of 20
22 fans, but there's more than that.

23 A. Probably, yeah. I mean, I've never actually
24 individually counted them all. I just know we have 10 fan shafts.

25 MR. NAVRALL: Thank you, that's all.

1 MR. FLANIGON: I'm good.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm good, too.

3 MR. FLANIGON: Okay. Anything you want to add?

4 MR. PENNING: No.

5 MR. FLANIGON: Should we have asked you some other
6 question? What's the answer to it?

7 MR. PENNING: No, you know, I really didn't know what to
8 expect. Although I really didn't think it was going to be like an
9 inquisition.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Sorry. Is that how it felt?

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We can make it that way.

12 (Laughter.)

13 MR. FLANIGON: I'll turn this guy off.

14 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: WMATA INCIDENT AT L'ENFANT PLAZA
STATION, WASHINGTON, D.C.
JANUARY 12, 2015
Interview of Joe Penning

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-15-FR-004

PLACE: Washington, D.C.

DATE: April 14, 2015

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.

Wendy C. Cutting
Transcriber