

Mineral Springs, North Carolina

Rear-end Collision of CSX Transportation Inc. Trains Q194-23 into Standing Train Q618-22

May 24, 2011

Mechanical Group Field Notes

Mechanical Group

Joseph Koeck, Federal Railroad Administration

Motive Power & Equipment

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Accident Summary

At approximately 3:35 a.m. EST, northbound CSX Transportation intermodal Train Q194-23 collided into the rear-end of standing Train Q618-22 on the Florence Division in Mineral Springs, North Carolina. The collision resulted in the derailment of the Q194's two locomotives and first two cars and the rear 4 cars on Train Q618-23, which subsequently resulted in 2 fatalities.

Equipment and Train History

At the time of the collision, standing Train Q618-22 consisted of two locomotives, UP 4220 and UP 3960, both SD70M, 8 loaded gondolas and one empty, non hazardous tank car.

Striking Train Q194-23 consisted of two locomotive units pulling 12 loaded TOFC-COFC cars. The train training tonnage was 1,562 tons; train length was 1,977 feet.

Train Q194-23 originated in Hulsey Yard in Atlanta, Georgia and was destined for Charlotte, North Carolina. A crew change was made in Greenwood, South Carolina at 2230.

According to statements received from the CSX Trainmaster located in Atlanta, Georgia Hulsey intermodal facility, the Y131-23 job performed the Class I Initial Terminal Air brake inspection on Train Q194-23 on the BLVD-2 track located at the Hulsey Yard in Atlanta, Georgia. Locomotives CSXT 7783 and CSXT 8429 were taken from the fuel pad and placed on the train by a hostler crew who were instructed to hang the EOT on the rear car, arm and test the EOT and perform a Class 3 continuity air brake test. The statement provided by the crews involved stated that the EOT tested good and that the flashing light was observed operating as intended.

Post-accident Mechanical Inspections

On May 25, 2011, the mechanical group met at the CSX Monroe Yard located in Monroe, North Carolina to inspect the 5 non-derailed cars off of standing train Q618-22, which had been taken from the accident site and spotted on track # 9 that morning. A two-unit locomotive (CSXT 7572, CSXT 8064) were coupled to the 5 cars and charging the air brake system while the carman monitored the handheld air gauge. The air brake test was performed in the following manner;

The brake system was charged to 90 psi.

A leakage test was performed and resulted in a 1 lb. drop per minute after a 20 psi reduction, cutting out maintaining feature, waiting 1 minute, and then noting the pressure drop over the next succeeding minute.

A CSX carman and CSX General foreman inspected one side, and a CSX carman and FRA inspector inspected the other side. No exceptions were taken to the Class I Initial Terminal Air brake inspection that was completed at 10:14 a.m.

On the same day, the mechanical group met at the CSX Catawba Yard located in Catawba, South Carolina to inspect the 10 non-derailed cars off of striking train Q194-23, which had been taken from the accident site and spotted on the "B" Track.. a single locomotive (CSXT 6092) was coupled to the ten cars and charging the air brake system while the carman monitored the handheld air gauge. The air brake test was performed the exact same way as mentioned above. There were no exceptions taken to the Class I Initial terminal air brake inspection. There was a 1 lb. drop per minute noted and the test was completed at 12:46 p.m.

On May 25, 2011, the mechanical group received the following documents for review pertaining to the Q194-23 and Q618-22;

FRA Form 6180-49A for CSXT 7783 and CSXT 8429

Fragment air cars for CSXT 7783 and CSXT 8429

Shop history for CSXT 7783 and CSXT 8429

Freight car repair history

Tonnage graph

Consist List

EOT Activity History

Train/Job profile inquiry

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