



AVIATION



HIGHWAY



MARINE



RAILROAD



PIPELINE

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Preliminary Report HWY24FH002

This information is preliminary and subject to change.

Fatal Grade Crossing Crash between Pickup Truck and Intercity Passenger Train

Melbourne, Florida
January 12, 2024

On Friday, January 12, 2024, about 12:51 p.m. eastern standard time, a 2004 Chevrolet Avalanche pickup truck, occupied by a driver and one passenger, was traveling west on W H Jackson Street in Melbourne, Brevard County, Florida. According to preliminary evidence, the pickup truck approached a railroad grade crossing, consisting of two main tracks, located west of the intersection of W H Jackson Street and South Harbor City Boulevard. As the pickup truck reached the grade crossing, the grade crossing the gates had already lowered and the flashing lights and bells were on. The pickup truck drove around the lowered gate and entered the grade crossing. At the same time, the southbound Brightline passenger train #102 was traveling about 78 mph on the east main rail, entered the grade crossing, and struck the pickup truck (see figure 1). The driver and passenger in the pickup truck died from injuries sustained in the crash.



Figure 1. Photograph of the January 12, 2024, crash showing the pickup truck and passenger train at final rest. (Source: Melbourne Police Department)

In support of this investigation, the NTSB collected information from a similar crash that occurred 2 days earlier, on Wednesday, January 10, 2024, at the same grade crossing. The crash occurred about 2:00 p.m. when a 2008 Honda Element sport utility vehicle (SUV) occupied by a driver and three passengers was traveling west on W H Jackson Street. According to preliminary evidence, the SUV approached the grade crossing, drove around a vehicle that was stopped at the stop line behind the fully lowered crossing gate, and then drove around the lowered gate, entering the grade crossing. The SUV struck the lead car of a Brightline passenger train, which was traveling north at about 68 mph on the west main track. The driver of the SUV died from injuries sustained in the crash, and the passengers were seriously injured.

At the crash location, W H Jackson Street is a two-lane undivided roadway with a 30-mph speed limit. The grade crossing is signalized with flashing lights, bells, crossbucks, and gates for vehicles and pedestrians.

Parties to the NTSB investigation include the following

- Florida East Coast Railway
- Brightline

The January 12 crash remains under investigation with the intent of issuing safety recommendations to prevent similar events. Future investigative activity will focus on factors that address grade crossing safety.