



**Survival Factors- Crashworthiness Investigation Attachment  
Chicago Fire Department Interviews**

**Chicago, IL  
RRD24MR002  
(59 pages)**



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**Investigator name: Sheryl Harley, Survival Factors/Crashworthiness Group Chairman**  
**Mode: Railroad**

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**Date: December 19, 2023, at about 9:18 a.m. (local time)**  
**Interviewee/Title: Matt Dowdall, Battalion Chief 9**  
**Also Present: Marc Ferman, Deputy Fire Commissioner of Operations**  
**NTSB Accident Number: RRD24MR002**

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**Narrative:** On Tuesday, December 19, 2023, at about 9:18 a.m., the in-person interview with Battalion Chief Dowdall was conducted at Battalion 9 headquarters, located at 6030 N. Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois. Also in attendance was Deputy Fire Commissioner Marc Ferman.

**Interviewed: Battalion Chief/EMT Matt Dowdall**

**The following is a summary of the interview conducted with Chief Dowdall.**

Chief Dowdall advised that he was in the process of “picking up” at a (\*unrelated) hazardous materials incident. The call was initially received as a CTA involved with a car. The chief advised that he immediately had a question because the address provided was not a location where a train and a car could interact. The chief advised that it was more likely that the incident occurred in the rail yard as opposed to a station. The initial address given for the incident was 7519 North Paulina. Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC) provided an update that indicated that the incident occurred in the rail yard. OEMC also advised that the power had been removed from the tracks.

Chief Dowdall advised that he had the company “split”. Engine 102 went to the Haskins-Main entrance. The chief noted that Engine 102 knows the area very well because the company is the first due engine for the (\*CTA property). Engine 102 went to the Howard Street side and found no activity there. The crew then checked the entrance at 7750 North Haskins next. Truck 25 was sent to the Chicago Avenue side of the CTA property which would allow them to see into the rail yard. (The chief noted that North Clark changes to Chicago Avenue once it crosses into



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the city of Evanston. This information was provided to the arriving companies and was helpful in locating the incident. The chief advised that the entire CTA property is within the boundaries of the city of Chicago and not the jurisdiction of the city of Evanston. While responding, the incident was escalated to Box EMS Plan 1. The chief arrived at the Chicago Avenue rail yard gate at the same time with Truck 25. The gate was open, which was an indication to the chief that this was the right location. He advised that the gate is normally closed. During training with CTA, an employee is usually posted at the gate. The chief advised that at the time he arrived, there was no CTA employee posted at the open gate. Engine 102 made its way through the yard, crossed over the tracks, and met up with the chief. The staging area was on Chicago Avenue and north of Howard.

Chief Dowdall advised that he was familiar with the rail yard. He had participated in several "walk throughs" of the rail yard on previous occasions and he was familiar with the Skokie Swift-Yellow Line. Upon arriving at the scene, he observed the 2-car Yellow-Line train that had collided with the snowplow. There were CTA employees standing on the right side of track. The chief radioed another request to OEMC requesting a secondary hold, shutting off of the power to the tracks. Power was shut off for the yellow, purple and red line tracks and the cloverleaf. The truck company "chain out" the track. The chief explained that "chain out" is similar to a lock-out, tag out procedure that shorts out the power if the track is inadvertently re-energized. Three companies were used to perform the "chain out" operation. Truck 25 was ordered to "chain out" at the red line cloverleaf. Truck 47 "chain out" south of the incident on the yellow line tracks in both the northbound and southbound directions, and Squad 2, "chain out" north of the two train cars on the yellow line on both the northbound and southbound tracks. CTA employees were on the scene and confirmed that the power had been shut off.

The chief advised that there were 6 CTA employees that were on the snowplow with one employee underneath the equipment. This employee was identified as Mr. Ron Okeley. Mr.



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Chief Dowdall advised that a triage area was set up on the right side of the embankment by EMS personnel who used triage tarps to sort the injured. The location of the triage area was adjacent to the right side of the tracks. The “walking wounded” or green patients were held back until enough personnel was available to walk them across the tracks, again after ensuring that the power was off. After the yellows were back boarded and stoke basketed to the triage area, then the greens were removed. There wasn’t enough manpower, so the chief requested assistance from the Chicago Police Department (CPD) personnel that were on the scene. CTA and CPD personnel were very helpful once they were provided instructions on how to remove the victims from the track area. The chief noted that CTA had immediately remove the power, its personnel were on the scene and willing to assist. A CTA(?) sergeant was directing traffic at Juneway Terrace. Deputy Chief Brooks arrived on the scene and spoke to Chief Dowdall about the need for more resources. Chief Jurewicz 2-1-22 (\*call sign) arrived and asked for a Plan 3. Chief Dowdall advised that he had already implemented the Plan 2 shortly after the Plan 1 had been initiated.

The chief advised that he had experienced no problems with CTA and complimented the CFD EMS personnel for “staying in their lane”. The EMS staff set up the triage/treatment areas and ambulances were staged down the street towards Howard Street. There was ample room for staging equipment on the scene. After the victims had been removed from the scene, CFD fire suppression personnel conducted a primary, secondary, and final search of the train, the track and embankment. Once that was completed, the scene was turned back over to CTA. The chief advised that he spoke to Mr. Mooney regarding the need to leave the “chains” in place. After the incident, Chief Dowdall advised that he took the time to survey the scene regarding potential future incidents, involving CTA trains, such as the need to “lift” a train during a rescue. The chief explained the various types of ladders used in the operation. He advised that dependent on their intended use, different ladders were deployed during the operation. The ladders used by the



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Okeley was located under the rear “truck” but was not pinned by the snowplow. At the time, he was bleeding profusely. The officer of Truck 25 went under the equipment to render aid to the employee. He applied a tourniquet that was provided to him by an officer from the Chicago Police Department. The truck officer, Captain Cronin, applied the tourniquet, and then assisted in the removal of the Priority 1 patient from the scene.

Chief Dowdall advised that the two train cars were located on the southbound track and that he was initially advised that there were 10 occupants on board the train. Later, that number had increased to 32. When he arrived, the platform doors were open, and he observed several passengers lying on the floor inside of the train cars. The most severely injured was the train operator. The operator had sustained a large laceration to the leg and the firefighter/paramedic on Engine 102 was attending to him. An ALS (Advanced Life Support) unit 71 was performing triage. Members of the Chicago Fire Department applied a tourniquet to the train operator’s leg. The chief advised that he spoke briefly to the operator who advised that he “bailed” and came out of the compartment and had been injured.

Chief Dowdall advised that equipment used during the incident included 8-foot straight frame ladders, stokes baskets, chains. The Field Officer 452 (\*call sign) was in the triage area, prioritizing the victims. The first to be transported from the scene was the two Priority 1 patients, the CTA employee underneath the snowplow and the train operator. Stokes baskets were used to move the victims up the steep hill. A lot of manpower was needed to get the victims up to the top of the hill. A relay was initiated to move people up to the top without exhausting CFD personnel. The relay was accomplished by packaging the victims onto backboards and then into stokes baskets by personnel at the track level. Personnel would then carry the victims part of the way up the embankment. A relief crew would then take over and carry the victim up the remainder of the hill.



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fire department are used for rescue operations whereas the CTA ladders were designed for the evacuation of passengers from the train.

Chief Dowdall commented that everyone worked well together. The “Alarm Office” provided the information about the power being off and there was no rush to restore the power. The chief noted that CFD personnel chocked the wheels of the snowplow as well as the train to prevent rolling, as per their training, and prior to conducting operations under the snowplow or entering the train cars. He noted that an issue had been encountered involving the snowplow. The snowplow was a diesel, and no one knew how to shut it down. The injured crew, that had been on the snowplow, included 4 employees and 2 supervisors (\*unsure of the breakdown?) had already been removed from the scene and they (CFD) had to wait for additional CTA personnel to arrive on the scene to shut it down. Though they could not shut down the snowplow, the chief noted that it was not in harm’s way. It was leaking hydraulic fluid and absorbent was used to mitigate the hazard, while the snowplow was still running and CFD awaited the arrival of someone trained to shut it down. The chief advised that the officer of the truck, Captain Cronin, had requested chocks to secure it. CFD fire suppression personnel are familiar with CTA train cars and where, on those cars, they can find wheel chocks. CFD crews are trained to use them.

On the following workday, an after-action briefing was held with all the companies involved. The discussion also included providing personnel with information regarding resources to help manage the stress and aftermath of the incident.

***(Question: Investigator Harley: I believe I know but for the record can you tell me what OEMC stands for?)***

*Answer: Chief Dowdall: Office of Emergency Management and Communications*

*Chief Ferman: OEMC is the communications for the fire department and the police department.*

*The fire department and the police department are dispatched separately, on different channels.*



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***(Question: Investigator Harley: Are the EMS units dispatched on the same channel as the fire suppression units?)***

*Answer: Chief Ferman: Yes. Fire and EMS are on the same frequency.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Can you explain what you meant by Skokie Swift?)***

*Answer: Chief Dowdall: Yes, the yellow line was the old Skokie Swift line. It is referred to as the Skokie-Swift Yellow line. It's the same thing.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: When was the Plan 1 initiated? Did that happen enroute?)***

*Answer: Chief Dowdall: Yes, and they also clarified that the incident was in the rail yard. The responding units were Engine 102, Truck 25, Engine 71, Engine 59, Engine 70, Truck 47, Tower-Ladder 21, Squad 2. There were two commands set up. One down at the rail bed, the forward command, and one up top in the rail yard. Personnel were kept up top and ready to go.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: You said when you arrived that there was no one at the entrance gate?)***

*Answer: Chief Dowdall: There was no one posted. The gate is normally locked. If it's open, there is usually someone standing there. This is a good indication that this is the correct location. Normally, someone would wave us into the yard. They must have been down below. I do give CTA credit for opening the gate. If it hadn't been open, it may have resulted in turning units around once we located the scene. This sped our response to the correct location. Engine 102 had gone to the North Haskins address.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Tell me more about CFD's familiarity with CTA operations and its equipment.)***



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*Answer: Chief Dowdall: CFD has a Target Hazard program. It helps to become familiar with these hazards and access points. The program certainly helped us because we immediately began questioning the address locations, Howard Street and Paulina that we were given. We knew that the locations couldn't have been correct. We were familiar with the rail yard and the various access points. CTA is very accommodating when it comes to our training.*

***(Question: Harley: The program is a CFD program and not a CTA sponsored program?)***

*Answer: Chief Dowdall: No, the program is a CFD program. CTA had started to invite CFD to see their facilities, bus, and rail yards. We are provided with a "walk through" and can even receive these when we arrive at the location unannounced. CTA invites us out to see their newest equipment, buses and trains and provide information about the pros and cons and what safety issues we should be aware of.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Reviewing some of the information you provided, you said that the rail yard is in Chicago but Chicago Avenue, the access to the yard is in the city of Evanston Where is Evanston's first due area?)***

*Answer: Chief Dowdall: Evanston's first due starts at North Howard, the 1500 block. Chicago and Evanston are divided by the rail yard. Juneway Terrace is in Chicago; this is where the Yellow-Line Skokie Swift Line goes into the rail yard.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: You spoke about the secondary power shut off. Can you explain further?)***

*Answer: Chief Dowdall: We go through OEMC, who contacts CTA and confirms that the power has been shut off. Evanston had to respond to two trapped trains because the power had been shut off up to Noyes Street. Evanston's Fire and Police Chiefs responded to the scene because people in those trapped trains had to be walked back to the stations.*





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*(Chief Dowdall provided additional background information and clarification about the incident).* The chief advised that the term trapped train was a CTA term used to define a train that has stopped because the power had been removed. Captain Cronin was the officer of Truck 25 who had attended to the injured CTA employee underneath the snowplow, applying the tourniquet and helping to remove him from under the equipment. Chief Dowdall advised that the platform doors were open in the west side and that CFD personnel opened the doors on the other side. None of the occupants of the train cars had left the train. They were removed by emergency personnel. The chief corrected the investigator about the presence of officers on the scene. The officers were members of CPD, this included the probationary officer who had the tourniquet which was handed over to the field training officer and given to Captain Cronin to apply to the injured employee. ***(Question: Investigator Harley: Do CFD personnel carry tourniquets?) Answer: Chief Dowdall: Yes, CFD as well as CPD carries tourniquets.*** The chief advised that one of the CPD officers was Officer Allison Christiansen but did not have the name of the male officer. *(Question: Investigator Harley: Chief, you said that you spoke to Mr. Mooney on the scene, who is he?) Answer: Chief Dowdall: Mr. Mooney was a CTA supervisor. (Question: Investigator Harley: And what was his role during this incident?) Answer: Chief Dowdall: He was on the scene to oversee the operation. He was on hand to provide CFD with information. He was easily recognizable as someone in charge, wearing an appropriate helmet and vest. There were other supervisors on the scene, but they came and went.*

Chief Dowdall advised that most of the patients were yellow or green and ambulatory. Later, he was advised that there had been a third red patient. The chief advised that the operation went well by the standpoint of orders given to personnel and their being carried out, the availability of personnel and equipment, and the operation to secure the chains. He advised that the triage operation was excellent and coordinated at its different points. He noted that anyone who experienced discomfort was automatically carried and the department utilized the Medical



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Bus to transport victims. The chief advised that he believed that it was important for personnel to see this equipment in use. Both the fire suppression and EMS personnel worked well together.

***(Question: Investigator Harley: The After-Action briefing was held at a different time than the one attended by the EMS personnel. CFD after-action briefing does not incorporate the participation of everyone from the incident at the same time?)***

*Answer: Chief Dowdall: Not everyone can attend these after-action briefings because of the varying schedules, days off, different platoons, etc. Not everyone is working and can be available. Fire suppression personnel work 1 day on and two days off. Whereas the EMS personnel work 1 day on and three days off.*

***(Chief Ferman commented that due to the different shifts, it would take a 12-day cycle before the same personnel both fire and EMS would work together again).***

*Chief Dowdall: That was too long to wait to have the after-action briefing. This is the reason why the quick. at the conclusion of the incident, on-scene debriefing with all personnel is conducted. The on-scene debriefing was held for approximately 5-10 minutes with all the participants. The length of time of the meeting was affected by the previous fire and "pinned in" incident that had occurred that day. For the after-action briefing, held by the fire suppression (\*side of the house), EMS supervisors along with representatives from other agencies and divisions were invited and attended the briefing.*

Chief Dowdall advised that CFD was dispatched at 1035 hours. The initial address was 7750 North Haskins Avenue, and the nature was an auto and a CTA train. Later, OEMC clarified the call as a train into the rail yard. Engine 102 and Truck 25 personnel knew that Clark Street turned into Chicago Avenue. OEMC also notified responding units that Clark becomes Chicago.



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*(Question: Investigator Harley: Can you please explain the EMS Plans and the incremental increase in resources as the plan goes up?)*

*Answer: Chief Ferman: As the Plan classification increases, the number of ALS ambulance increases by 5. There is also an increase in the number of EMS supervisors and fire suppression apparatus.*


Chief Ferman noted that during the incident, it was 5-15, the Special Operations Battalion Chief, that had come up with the relay plan to move the victims up the steep embankment but minimize the effects on personnel.

Interview ended at 10:20 a.m.

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### End of Summary

I have reviewed this document and found it to be true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Matthew Dowdall  
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Signature  
3/3/2024  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



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I have reviewed this document and found it to be true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Matthew Dowdall  
P [REDACTED] 3/3/2024  
Signature Date

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Signature Date



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**Investigator name: Sheryl Harley, Investigator, Survival Factors Group**  
**Mode: Rail**

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**Date: December 19, 2023, at about 11:08 a.m. (local time)**  
**Interviewees: Captain Michael Cronin and Firefighter James Marbach, Truck 25**  
**NTSB Accident Number: RRD24MR002**

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**Narrative:** On Tuesday, December 19, 2023, at about 11:08 a.m. Investigator Harley conducted the interviews with Captain Michael Cronin and Firefighter James Marbach at the Battalion 9 headquarters located at 6030 N. Clark Street in Chicago, IL. Also in attendance was the Deputy Fire Commissioner of Operations, Chief Marc Ferman.

The following is a summary of the interview with Captain Cronin and Firefighter Marbach

Captain Cronin:

Captain Cronin advised that the truck company was at the fuel depot when it was dispatched. The dispatch address provided was 7X19 Paulina. Engine 102 took the North Haskins side of the yard, and the truck went by the 7X19 Paulina Avenue address but found nothing. The truck company went north to Chicago Avenue and its personnel was met at the entrance gate by CPD and CTA personnel. The captain advised that he went into the yard to conduct reconnaissance of the scene. CTA personnel escorted the captain to the scene and confirmed that the power had been shut off. To get to the location, Captain Cronin advised that he climbed up a steep hill, then cross over some tracks at the top of that hill before descending the other side. From the top of the hill, the captain advised that he could see the front of the damaged train and the snowplow. At that time, the two were approximately 20 feet apart.

After reaching the snowplow, the captain observed one individual underneath the vehicle. The person appeared to have sustained a life-threatening injury. The captain used his helmet to chock the wheels and then leaned down underneath the snowplow to render aid to the injured person. Captain Cronin advised that the person was lying under the snowplow but was not pinned by it. The victim had sustained a severe gash, an avulsion, to his wrist and a CPD officer on the scene handed the captain a tourniquet which he applied to the injured extremity. At that time, Chief Dowdall arrived at the triage area and using a "bucket brigade" type operation, ferried victims from the track area up the hill. Captain Cronin advised that the ferry operation



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entailed using personnel to carry victims from the track area halfway up the hill, and there they were relieved by other personnel who carried the victims the remainder of the way up the hill.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Can you explain your route to the scene?)**

*Answer: Captain Cronin- The incident scene is a straight shot from Chicago. Once on the scene in the rail yard, you make a slight right to climb the hill to reach the tracks at the top. The hill overlooks the area of the accident scene, just walk straight down the hill.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Were there members of CTA on the scene who were not part of the involved or injured crews?)**

*Answer: Captain Cronin: There were both CTA and CPD personnel on the scene. I saw at least 3 down at the scene.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Did you speak to the individual underneath the snowplow about the circumstances of the accident?)**

*Answer: Captain Cronin: He only kept saying "my arm, my arm, save my arm" He was conscious, coherent, and followed commands.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Did you enter any of the train cars?)**

*Answer: Captain Cronin: I did not go into any of the train cars. There were plenty of CFD personnel already inside. It was pretty cramped quarters.*

Firefighter Marbach:

I came through the rear with the stokes basket, fiberglass ladder and pike pole, the "Wigi" tester and chains. Standard equipment for this type of incident.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: What is a "Wigi" tester?)**

*Answer: Captain Cronin: The "Wigi" tester is a tool to test the 3<sup>rd</sup> rail power.*

Firefighter Marbach continued:

Firefighter Marbach advised that the difficulties he encountered upon arrival was the lack of coordination and communications between CTA employees. When he entered the yard, the employee seemed unsure as to where to take the firefighter. The employee eventually led the firefighter to the scene but used a long, indirect way of getting there, resulting in what the firefighter described as "a lot of climbing up and down and going around" to get to the location.



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Upon arrival, Truck 25 was told to chain out the track in front, Truck 47 chained out the rear. The firefighter confirmed that power was out and notified his captain. **(Question: Investigator Harley: Chain out in front of what, the snowplow or the train cars?)** Answer: Firefighter Marbach: Chained out in front of the snowplow.

After that, the firefighter reported that he helped move the injured man underneath the snowplow to a stokes basket to be removed from the scene. The gentleman was the most critically injured of the victims on the scene. He was taken out to an awaiting ambulance and was the first to leave the scene.

**(Question: Investigator Harley to Firefighter Marbach: Did the gentleman say anything to you?)**

Answer: Firefighter Marbach: He didn't say anything

**(Question: Investigator Harley to both firefighters: Have you ever received any training regarding how to handle rail emergencies?)**

Answer: Both firefighters described a variety of rail safety training that they have received over time. Training included Basic-Metro drills, proper method to shut off power "chain out", extrication techniques involving lifting of train cars, and the use of specialized equipment for rail related operations.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Did either of you encounter any difficulties on the scene?)**

Answer: Captain Cronin: The walking up and down the embankment was the most difficult part. We received a lot of help from CTA which was why things went so well. The ambulances were lined up and ready to go. We were fortunate not to have had a lot of seriously injured which reduce the temperature of the incident.

Answer: Firefighter Marbach: The only issue was the route that I took to get to the scene following CTA employee.

Additional: Captain Cronin: It was difficult to locate in the yard.

Firefighter Marbach: (agreed) It wasn't easy.

The two firefighters re-iterated that the issues caused by the steep terrain was mitigated effectively by using the "bucket brigade" type operation to remove the victims from the scene.



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**(Question: Investigator Harley: Did either of you attend the After-action briefing for the incident?)**

Answer: Captain Cronin: No

Firefighter Marbach: Yes. **(Question: Investigator Harley: Describe the content of the meeting)**

Answer: Firefighter Marbach: The meeting included a combination of CFD, CTA, CPD to discuss what happen, the operation, what went right, what went wrong and what needed to be improved upon.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Outside of the issues with CTA, did you have any other difficulties?)**

Answer: Firefighter Marbach: Not personally

Answer: Captain Cronin: Trying to get a hold of a chief who is on a different radio channel is challenging. Frequently, the chiefs are operating on two radios so it may take some time to get a hold of the chief. The radios work properly, it's just timing when someone is trying to communicate over two different radios.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: On major incidents like this, do you use different channels, switch over to a fireground frequency for example?)**

Answer: Captain Cronin: We use different frequencies to help with the traffic congestion on one radio channel. Someone from EMS monitors the fire channel and vice versa.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Let's talk about CFD Standard Operating Procedure when dealing with CTA incidents.**

Answer: Captain Cronin: Personnel are trained to identify the third rail. The SOP for the truck includes when personnel are operating on the track, what equipment is needed and how it is used during the incident.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: (To both firefighters) Is there anything that I should have asked you but failed to do so?)**

Answer: (Both): No.

**(Question: Chief Ferman to Captain Cronin: Did you go inside?)**

Answer: No. I was immediately tasked with aiding the injured employee underneath the snowplow. That was our priority. There were medics and police officers already inside of the





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*train cars assisting the occupants. Medic 71 was on the train performing triage. The chief was right behind me and took care of the operation inside of the train cars.*

***(Question: Chief Ferman: Truck 25 and Engine 102 received the call for the “train crash” and an address of 7519 Paulina?)***

*Answer: Captain Cronin: We responded by ourselves. Engine 102 went to the scene from the station. We went to Pauline and Engine 102 went to Haskins. It was easy to go from there to Chicago Avenue.*

***(Question: Chief Ferman: Were you (Truck 25) the first to arrive?)***

*Answer: Captain Cronin: Yes. We arrived at the front entrance and CPD and CTA were there to wave us in. We realized that this was the right location after we went to 7519 Paulina and saw nothing there. We advised Battalion 9. Upon arrival, I followed the CTA employee in, along with the CPD officers. Battalion 9 knew that when he arrived and found the gate open that this was the correct location. He came in behind us.*

***(Question: Chief Ferman: Had you ever dealt with these types of snowplows before?)***

*Answer: Captain Cronin: No. Never seen one before. I didn't know it was diesel.*

***(Question: Chief Ferman: Have you received any training dealing with snowplows for train cars.)***

*Answer: Captain Cronin: In the past, we have had several incidents involving the “snowplows” that are attached to the train cars. These snowplows are attached and detach from the actual car. The problem is that they hang low to the ground, limiting the clearance underneath the train car. We have had recent training with CTA regarding how to remove these de-attachable snowplows from the train cars, but I have never received any training on that type of snowplow.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: To confirm, the snowplow was still running while you were attending to the victim underneath it?)***

*Answer: Captain Cronin: Yes*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: To confirm, that though there were some CTA employees on the scene, they did not know how to shut off the snowplow.***

*Answer: Captain Cronin: That's correct.*



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Interview ended at 11:45 p.m.

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## End of Summary

I have reviewed this document and found it to be true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

PLEASE NOTE ADDRESS CORRECTION ON ATTACHED  
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MICHAEL E. CROWIN  
Print  
[Redacted Signature] Date 5/3/24

JAMES MARBACH  
James Marbach  
Print  
[Redacted Signature] Date



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**Investigator name: Sheryl Harley, Investigator, Survival Factors Group**  
**Mode: Rail**

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**Date: December 19, 2023, at about 10:30 a.m. (local time)**  
**Interviewee: Captain Gary Coney, Special Operations Unit**  
**NTSB Accident Number: RRD24MR002**

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**Narrative:** On Tuesday, December 19, 2023, at about 10:30 a.m., Investigator Harley conducted the interview with Captain Coney at CFD Battalion 9 headquarters located at 6030 N. Clark Street in Chicago, IL. Present was Deputy Fire Commissioner of Operations, Chief Marc Ferman.

The following is a summary of the statement provided by Captain Coney.

The captain advised that he was coming from a distance and arrived late. CFD units were already on the scene when he arrived. The captain walked up to the snowplow and found that it was already in parked, and the wheels had been chocked. The victim was no longer in front of the snowplow. At that time, there was a request for chains to be applied to the north side of the train. Occupants were being removed from the interior of the train cars. The captain advised that he observed several people standing outside of the train cars on the west side as well as several people on the inside of the cars being treated. The captain advised that the tourniquet had already been applied to the train conductor (\*interviewee referred to operator as conductor.) and the individual had been placed on a back board. Another gentleman was observed in the rear of the car with some type of foot injury and a splint had been applied to the injured foot before removing the gentleman from the train car.

Captain Coney advised that due to the steep terrain, it was determined that it would be easier on the manpower to use a “shuttle” system. Personnel would move a victim halfway up the hill, and hand the victim off to another group of responders who would carry the individual up the rest of the way.



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***(Questions: Investigator Harley: Did you encounter any CTA employees who were not victims in the accident?)***

*Answer: Captain Coney: Yes, I saw quite a few CTA employees. The CTA Fire Marshal was on the scene. He was easy to see due to his white helmet. I also saw a number of CTA employees wearing their characteristic "bus driver hat".*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Did these CTA employees assist you/CFD with your on-scene operations?)***

*Answer: Captain Coney: I don't remember seeing any of the CTA employees helping.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Have you ever received any training on how to handle rail emergencies?)***

*Answer: Captain Coney: Yes, just that morning we were at the CTA Skokie Yard looking at train cars in the event of a rescue scenario that calls for us to lift a car to gain access underneath it. We saw the snowplow leave the yard shortly before. We have done this type of training several times, at least 3 times at the Skokie Yard. I recognized the CTA Fire Marshal because he was with us at the Skokie Yard during the training.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Could anyone, the Fire Marshal for instance, explain why they were unable to shut down the snowplow?)***

*Answer: Captain Coney: I don't remember*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Did you enter any of the train cars?)***

*Answer: Captain Coney: No*



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***(Question: Investigator Harley: Did you have a sense of how many people were still in the train car when you arrived on the scene?)***

*Answer: Captain Coney: Maybe two. There were a lot of fire personnel in the car.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Were these at the location, in the same train car, as the conductor (\*interviewer used the same terminology as the interviewee when referring to the train operator)***

*Answer: Captain Coney: There were only a few passengers left in that car.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Captain Coney, do you have a sense of how much time passed between the time you were dispatched and the time you arrived on the scene?)***

*Answer: Captain Coney: I don't know. I really couldn't tell you.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Did you know where to go? When dispatched or once on the scene?)***

*Answer: Captain Coney: Generally, but once we got on the scene, I didn't know where to go.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: How were you directed to the location?)***

*Answer: Captain Coney: We went through the gate. People were waving that the train was down below.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Were the individuals waving to you, CPD or CTA personnel?)***

*Answer: Captain Coney: I believe they were CTA. I did see individuals in fire clothing.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Do you have any sense of timing between your arrival and when the last victim left the scene?)***

*Answer: Captain Coney: No*



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**(Question: Investigator Harley: After the removal of the victims, what did you do next?)**

*Answer: Captain Coney: We double checked the train for any additional victims. This including looking underneath, we waited for order to remove the chains and go back in service.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Is there anything that I should have asked you and didn't?)**

*Answer: Captain Coney: You could have asked how far is the station? (Investigator Harley: Fair point. How far is it?). Answer: Captain Coney: The station is about 1000 feet, maybe a 1/2 mile away. You could see it from the scene. There is a grade, the train goes from a lower to higher elevation as it approaches the train station.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: You spoke frequently about the difficulty in negotiating the terrain for personnel and carrying victims. Can you describe it?)**

*Answer: Captain Coney: The track bed was made of rocks. There were stones, dirt and prairie weed on the hill. There was really poor footing because of the rocky ground and the presence of the weeds.*

**(Question: Investigation Harley: This was the reason behind the need to conduct a relay operation. Go over the operation once more.)**

*Answer: Captain Coney: From the track bed the crew used stokes baskets to carrying the victims halfway up the steep hill. Midway, other personnel met them and took over carrying the victim up the rest of the way to the awaiting ambulances.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: How far would you guess is the distance from the track bed to the top of the hill?)**

*Answer: Captain Coney: About 125 feet*



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

*(Question: Investigator Harley: Captain, do you have any questions for me?)*

*Answer: Captain Coney: Are you looking for fault?*

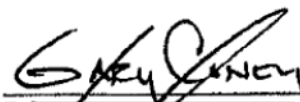
*Answer: Investigator Harley: No. The NTSB does not look for fault or assign blame. We don't assign criminality or civil liability. We are a non-enforcement agency tasked solely with investigating transportation type accidents and trying to prevent them from re-occurring or at least mitigate the severity of the injuries if it should re-occur.*

*Interview ended at 11:00 a.m.*

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**End of Summary**

I have reviewed this document and found it to be true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.



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Signature

03 MARCH 2024

Date



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**Investigator name:** Sheryl Harley, Investigator, Survival Factors Group  
**Mode:** Railroad

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**Date:** December 19, 2023, at about 12:05 p.m. (local time)  
**Interviewee:** Battalion Chief Robert Maibuecher, SOP 5-15  
**NTSB Accident Number:** RRD24MR002

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**Narrative:** On Tuesday, December 19, 2023, at about 12:05 p.m. Investigator Harley interviewed Battalion Chief Robert Maibuecher at Battalion 9 headquarters located at 6030 N. Clark Street in Chicago, IL. Also in attendance was Deputy Fire Commissioner Marc Ferman.

A summary of the interview with Battalion Chief Maibuecher is provided below.

### **Interviewed: Battalion Chief Robert Maibuecher**

The chief advised that the SOP was usually sent to scenes and tasked to oversee large or unique incidents. At the time of the incident, the chief responded from a distance. Prior to the call to the CTA accident, he was on the south side at a fire. Upon arrival, some of the injured at already been transported from the scene. He walked to the track area, which he described as “subsurface” following the flow of people as they came from the accident site and made their way to the ambulances. Some of the victims were walking and at least 15 were moved by stretcher and stokes. A “chain” was instituted to assist with the moving of victims from the track area to ambulances. The chief advised that when he arrived “chains” and ladders were already in place.

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Have you ever experienced this degree of difficulty in the evacuation of victims from the scene resulting from the terrain?)***

***Answer: Chief Maibuecher: I have experience dealing with high-rise fires where victims had to be carried down from upper floors or situation where victims located in a basement and had to be move upstairs. However, never in a mass casualty incident like this.***





## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Upon your arrival to the accident site, were there people still on the train.)**

*Answer: Chief Maibuecher: Yes, there were people still on the train, but I believe that they could walk. I could see passengers coming down the ladders and walking over.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Can you outline the training you have received in handling rail related emergencies)**

*Answer: Chief Maibuecher: I have received training in the procedures to secure and lift a train car, how to secure the third rail on the scene, and the proper coordination with OEMC- Fire Alarm Office and CTA.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: How is this training initiated?)**

*Answer: Chief Maibuecher: The training is through CFD's collaboration with CTA. This cooperation has been going on for years. We send as many firefighters as possible through their training center to train them on where and how to shut off power, how to open the platform doors with the keys and how to open windows in an emergency, and the safest way to operate on the tracks. We have tracks and train cars to practice on for simulated emergencies such as train car, electrical and hydrogen fires.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: You mentioned windows, what type of training did you receive that included the use of windows as an emergency exit?)**

*Answer: Chief Maibuecher: CTA trains us on the proper ways to force open the windows at the seal.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: You mentioned the platform door keys. Does CTA provide those to CFD?)**

*Answer: Chief Maibuecher: Yes, I have a set of keys that can open the train car doors.*

**(Follow up Question: Investigator Harley: Are those keys accessible to all fire companies?)**

*Answer: Chief Maibuecher: No, I don't think so. I don't know who has access to these keys besides me.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: During the incident did you see or talk to any of the CTA employees? Was information provided to you in real time by anyone from CTA on the scene?)**

*Answer: Chief Maibuecher: No. I was working under another chief officer.*

**(Follow up Question: Investigator Harley: Did you see any CTA employee on the scene?)**



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

*Answer: Chief Maibuecher: Yes, I saw several CTA employees. They were scattered throughout the scene.*

***(Follow up Question: Investigator Harley: These CTA employees, you are referring to, were not injured. These were other than the injured crewmembers on the scene?)***

*Answer: Chief Maibuecher: No, No. These were not the injured CTA employees.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: I want to talk about train car extrication. Have you ever had to perform an extrication through a train car window?)***

*Answer: Chief Maibuecher: No*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Chief Maibuecher, was there anything that you believe that I should have asked you but failed to do so?)***

*Answer: Chief Maibuecher: I don't believe so. Nothing comes to mind.*

*Welcomed any questions from Chief Ferman*

***(Question: Chief Ferman: Usually these operations are more involved when you have someone trapped underneath a train)***

*Answer: Chief Maibuecher: He had already been removed but coming up with a plan of operation to shuttle him to the top of the hill, which had poor footing and a fairly steep incline was challenging.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Did you enter any of the train cars?)***

*Answer: Chief Maibuecher: Yes, to make sure that everyone was out of the car. Also, I took the time to examine the car, looking to the future and potential emergency incidents involving the car.*

***(Question: Chief Ferman: Do you remember seeing the CTA Fire Marshal on the scene? A big guy with a mustache?)***

*Answer: Chief Maibuecher: Yes, Mike LaPina, was he there? I didn't know that. He did come to the after-action briefing.*



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Did you experience any other difficulties during the operation?)***

*Answer: Chief Maibuecher: The area surrounding the rail yard is in Evanston, but the yard is in our area. At one point, I overheard on a CTA radio that Battalion 21 wanted to regain power, but it wasn't our Battalion 21, it was Evanston's. That was confusing since we both have a Battalion 21. Shutting off the power at our scene caused an issue up the line, a domino effect that involved Evanston.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: How does CFD handle mutual aid, between Evanston and CFD?)***

*Answer: Chief Maibuecher: There have been times when we have responded to assist Evanston, but they haven't had to respond into Chicago. Usually, it limited to the 9<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Battalions that have responded into Evanston. We have used suburban companies to assist us.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: When these other companies or jurisdictions come into Chicago what steps do you take to ensure that there won't be any confusion over the radio between companies that may have the same unit numbers?)***

*Answer: Chief Maibuecher: The various chief officers stand next to each other at the incident. They have face-to-face communications.*

*Additional Comment Chief Ferman:*

*Our procedure is that when our companies are sent to another jurisdiction, a battalion chief also goes with them. Our battalion chief supervises our personnel on our radio frequency. The battalion chief maintains a face to face with the chief officers from the other jurisdiction. It is a rare occurrence, but we do have the ability to provide radios to outside agencies, through the MABAS Chief. I don't know if OEMC can provide radios. Normally, regardless of the location, units will use their normal radio identifier. We don't get to practice with MABAS except during the FAA drills. Every couple of years, we participate in the FAA drill out at the airport. A MABAS chief accompanies the participating units.*



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

*(Question: Investigator Harley: Can you clarify what MABAS stands for?)*

*Answer: Chief Ferman: MABAS- Mutual Aid Box Alarm System.*

*Interview ended at 12: 51 p.m.*

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### End of Summary

I have reviewed this document and found it to be true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

*Robert J. Maibuecher*  
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Print

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Signature

*3-3-24*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**Investigator name: Sheryl Harley, Investigator, Survival Factors Group**  
**Mode: Railroad**

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**Date: December 18, 2023, at about 3:44 p.m. (local time)**  
**Interviewed: Deputy Fire Commissioner Juan Hernandez and District Chief of EMS Operations Gregory Stinnett**  
**NTSB Accident Number: RRD24MR002**

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**Narrative:** On Monday, December 18, 2023, at about 3:44 p.m. Investigator Harley interviewed Deputy Fire Commissioner Juan Hernandez and District Chief of EMS Operations Gregory Stinnett at the Battalion 9 headquarters located at 6030 N. Clark Street, Chicago, IL. Also in attendance was Deputy Fire Commissioner Marc Fernan.

A summary of the interview with Deputy Fire Commissioner Hernandez and District Chief Stinnett is provided below.

### **District Chief Stinnett:**

Chief Stinnett advised that he was monitoring the radio and heard the call go out for a train versus an automobile. The chief was at Roosevelt and Canal and did not immediately respond. The chief reported that there was some confusion as to where the incident location was. Shortly after the initial call was put out, the EMS Plan 1 was initiated. The chief advised that Plan 1 includes the response of 5 ambulances, an EMS chief and fire suppression units for support. Chief Stinnett advised that he heard the Plan 2 being announced and at that time responded to the incident. The chief noted that two other incidents were in progress at the same time. A "3-11" Fire with a Level 2 Haz Mat and a large amount of EMS resources being used on the south end of the city. And In addition, there was a CTA Bus accident and "Pin in" response with an EMS Plan 1 in effect at the location of Roosevelt and Columbus in the south loop area. Chief Stinnett while monitoring radio traffic, noted that responding units had difficulty accessing the scene and the location kept changing. Chief Jurewicz eventually elevated the response to an EMS Plan 3 due to the increase count of victims.

Arriving at the entrance of the rail yard, Chief Stinnet observed Chief Hernandez and Chief Valez, who is the Deputy District Chief Special Events Coordinator conducted a face-to-face update. It appeared that the Casualty Collection point had been established, Triage Tarps had been laid out, the red and yellow were close together and the green were off to themselves. Chief Stinnett responded down to the location of the train and met with Chief Hedlund and Chief



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Gray. By that time all the critically injured patients had been removed. All the victims had been removed from the train and no one was left in the surrounding track area. The chief advised that there was an elderly male in the triage area and that a request for a stokes basket was made to move him. The chief advised that walking up the steep incline was difficult due to the "river rocks". CTA and CPD personnel were assisting firefighters with moving the victims with stokes baskets using a hand off to pass the victims up the hill. Ambulances personnel were brought into the yard for the transport of patients from the casualty *collection point*. The triage team at the train yard, accounted for all the victims and ensured that they were remove from the scene and transferred up to the Casualty collection tarps. 8812 arrived on the scene and staged at Howard and Clark Streets. CPD assisted with the 3 or 4 walking wounded (green category) who needed assistance. The Field Chief directed these individuals to the bus for further evaluation and transport. By that time only one yellow was left at the tarp but was removed and only the 5 green category patients (CTA employees) who had initially refused transport but changed their mind and wanted to be seen at the hospital. The CTA employees were also walked to the bus, 8812, to be transported from the scene. The Command Van communicated with Fire Alarm office and the Online Medical control hospital (to determine receiving hospitals ability to accept incoming patients. Chief Stinnett advised that on the scene he had a face-to face with Chief Hernandez as well as the Incident Commander, Chief Jurewicz.

The following week, the After-action briefing was conducted with the CPD Captain of the 24<sup>th</sup> District Police Station, the sergeant that applied the tourniquet, the CTA Safety Fire Marshal, the Chief of the Evanston Fire Department and chief officers and company officers from CFD.

Chief Stinnett advised that CFD was contacted by CTA regarding their employees. Two women from CTA risk-management wanted to discuss what information CFD would be releasing to the media. The CTA risk management officers voiced concerns about information being released regarding their employees. Chief Stinnett advised that any press brief would contain the basic incident information and would not include whether there were CTA employees involved.

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Were there other CTA employees on the scene, not including the injured?)***

***Answer: Chief Stinnett: Yes. There were CTA employees down in the track area. They were wearing vests. Along with the police officers on the scene, they assisted people up the hill.***

***(Questions: Investigator Harley: Were the five injured CTA employees still on the scene at that time?)***

***Answer: Chief Stinnett: I want to say yes.***



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

*Answer: Chief Hernandez: Yes, they were.*

*(Question: Investigator Harley: Did you talk to any of the CTA employees involved in the accident?)*

*Answer: Chief Stinnett: No, I did not.*

*(Question: Investigator Harley: Is there anything that you can think of that I should have asked you but didn't?)*

*Answer: Chief Stinnett: No, not that I could think of.*

### **Chief Juan Hernandez:**

Chief Hernandez advised that he doesn't recall the exact time, but he remembered that he and Chief Valez were on Lake Shore heading south. The chief advised that the incident started as an EMS Plan 1. There had been some confusion because it was initially reported as CTA versus a car. About 5 minutes later, the Plan 2 was announced, and Chief Hernandez advised that at that time, he turned around and started heading north. The chief advised that he was monitoring the fire suppression radio and over that radio heard Battalion 9 turn all the companies around, telling them to proceed on Clark which turns into Chicago and that the entrance was off Chicago. The same message had been relayed over the EMS channel. Chief Hernandez advised that because of Battalion 9's excellent instructions, units knew that Clark turned into Chicago. On the scene, apparatus was observed parked in the Mobile gas station and 3 or 4 ambulances were on the scene and facing south. He spoke to PMIC Daughtery (spelling?) who had been assigned as the staging officer before going into the yard. Chief Valez followed him in. Also on the scene were Chief Gray and Chief Delgado (403).

Ambulance stretchers were parked off to the side. Battalion 9 gave a size up of the scene and Chief Hernandez helped set up the casualty collection. Chief Valez was assigned transport officer. PMIC Daughtery would handle telemetry, destination, and communications with the hospital. Chief Hernandez advised that he and Chief Valez had previously worked a mass casualty incident together so were practiced in coordinating efforts. The chief advised that the recent "Active Shooter" training had helped to prepare personnel for this mass casualty incident. Assistant Chief Limbo had already brought out the triage tags in preparation for victims. When Chief Hernandez heard that personnel were running out of stokes baskets and he advised the ambulance crews to bring in their (\*skeds- spelling?). Chief Hernandez advised that when he arrived on the scene, the first red had already been transported. The second red victim, an elderly male was on the tarp. Chief Gray advised that 6 yellows would be coming up top and several greens came up to include the two pediatric patients, their mother, and the CTA employees who had initially refused. All those individuals that refused were documented. Another red and 9 more yellows arrived at the casualty collection area next. All the reds and most of the yellows were transported off the scene with some greens remaining. 451 (Jones) used the bus to transport



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

those greens, who had initially refused but changed their minds. Chief Hernandez advised that some duplication occurred because of individuals that initially refused transport but later changed their minds.

Communications at the scene went through the Command Van. In addition to law enforcement officers from CPD, officers from the City of Evanston were also on the scene. However, no resources from the City of Evanston Fire Department were present. The chief advised that no fire department resources (from Evanston) were on the scene.

After all the victims were transported from the scene, Chief Hernandez advised that along with Chief Gray, he went down to view the scene (the train). Chief Hernandez described the hill that the emergency responders had to climb while carrying patients was on a 35-degree incline (approximately) with rocks that made the footing slippery. He noted that stokes baskets were very useful but having skids proved to be a valuable tool.

Chief Hernandez advised that he had made several observations and developed some take-aways from the incident. One issue was the constant request from law enforcement for an update on the number of victims. Law Enforcement officers on the scene were a great help to CFD due to the terrain and the inability to use stretchers. The media had to be removed from the casualty collection point. The incident illustrated the need to provide "walk throughs" to EMS personnel as well as fire suppression personnel. CFD will develop a PowerPoint presentation for the local hospitals to provide discussion on the incident and the lessons learned.

A final accounting of the victims in the accident to include their injury classification and the medical facility was provided. The final count was 3 Reds, 9 Yellows and 11 Green. The injury classifications and the receiving medical facilities were 2 Reds, and 3 Greens were received at St. Francis Hospital, 1 Red and 2 Yellows were received by Advocate Masonic Hospital, 2 Yellows and 3 Greens were received at Swedish Covenant Hospital, 1 Yellow and 5 Greens were received at Weiss Memorial Hospital and 4 Yellows were transported to St. Joseph's Hospital.

Interview ended at 4:28 p.m.

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## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**End of Summary**

*This is a True and accurate Summary*

*Do [REDACTED] 15/19/24  
15 March 2024*



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**Investigator name: Sheryl Harley, Investigator, Survival Factors Group**  
**Mode: Railroad**

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**Date: December 18, 2023, at about 2:45 p.m. (local time)**  
**Interviewed: Paramedic Field Chief Dawn Hedlund (452) and Assistant Deputy Chief/Paramedic Keith Gray (4-4-11-1)**  
**NTSB Accident Number: RRD24MR002**

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**Narrative:** On Monday, December 18, 2023, at about 2:45 p.m., Investigator Harley conducted the interview with Field Chief/Paramedic Dawn Hedlund and Assistant Deputy Chief/Paramedic Keith Gray at the Battalion 9 headquarters located at 6030 N Clark Street, Chicago, IL. Also in attendance is Deputy Fire Commissioner Marc Ferman, Deputy Fire Commissioner Juan Hernandez, and District Chief of EMS Operations Gary Stinnett.

A summary of the interview with the chief officers is provided below.

### **Chief Dawn Hedlund:**

Chief Hedlund advised that the call came in as a car versus a train on Howard Street. It didn't make sense to her because the address was clearly not correct. Battalion 9 was behind her and at some point, it became apparent that Clark Street turned into Chicago Avenue. The staging area was close to the incident and Battalion 9 had already entered the yard. CTA employees had been present directing the first arriving emergency responders into the property. Upon entering the yard, Chief Hedlund advised that she was confused where to go. Another firefighter, on the scene, with her was also confused where the actual incident scene was. At that time, there were no CTA employees posted at the entrance to help direct the responders into the scene. Chief Hedlund advised that it would have been helpful if CTA had provided multiple employees so that someone would always be present at the entrance to assist with finding the scene. The chief and the firefighter waited a while before finding the accident under the tunnel. Once on the scene, Chief Hedlund advised that Battalion 9 was already there with a crew. The first arriving companies were directed by CTA staff. Since there were no other CTA staff members available to direct us, there was some initial confusion of the location for myself and another arriving crew. However, I do not feel we waited awhile before finding the actual location. I took it upon myself to walk further into the yard and was able to locate the incident. I believe the correct location was then announced and further directions were given to all responding crews.



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

At that point, the CTA fire marshal approached and provided Chief Hedlund with the number of injured and reported that there were 2 reds. Chief Hedlund advised that they were directed to the east side of the train. Two ambulance crews were performing triage on the scene, one crew on the east side and the other on the west side of the train. The crew from Engine 102 was working on the conductor (\*interviewee term to identify the train operator). A firefighter had applied a tourniquet to another person that was underneath the snowplow. Another patient was classified as a red after suffering an injured from striking his head during the accident. Battalion 9 had initiated the Plan 2, upgrading the response from the original Plan 1. Chief Jurewicz upgraded the incident to a Plan 3. Firefighters were assisting individuals with either walking or carrying them up the slope in a stokes. Chief Hedlund advised that there were 31 people on scene. The EMS bus 8812 was sent to the scene to assist with transport. I was told that a tourniquet was applied to the individual under the snowplow, but it's unclear who applied it.

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Chief Hedlund, when you arrive at the entrance to the yard, the CTA employees that had been there initially had disappeared?)***

*Answer: Chief Hedlund: There was no one from CTA at the entrance.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: You were approached by the CTA fire marshal; do you know who this individual was?)***

*Answer: Chief Hedlund: I don't know*

*Question: Chief Ferman: Was it a big guy with a bushy mustache?*

*Answer: Chief Hedlund: I don't know. I wasn't paying that close attention to him. I was approached by a man who introduced himself as the Fire Marshal, but unfortunately, I did not record his name.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Did you enter any of the train cars?)***

*Answer: Chief Hedlund: No*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Were there passengers still in the train cars upon your arrival?)***

*Answer: Chief Hedlund: Yes, they were taking them out on the west side and walking them east.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Just to confirm my understanding of the evacuation of the passengers, they were being removed from the train car from the west side?)***

*Answer: Chief Hedlund: Yes. That's correct.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Who told you about the person that was trapped underneath the snowplow?)***

*Answer: Chief Hedlund: The fire marshal*

*Answer: Chief Keith Gray: The fire marshal's first name was Mike, but I don't know what his last name is.*



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Was the victim trapped underneath the snowplow the first to be transported from the scene?)**

**Answer: Chief Hedlund:** He left first. E-102 was still working on the conductor inside of the train.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Do you have some sense as to how soon the EMS Plan was upgraded to a Plan 3?)**

**Answer: Chief Hedlund:** Pretty much right away. Chief Jurewicz was right behind me and calling the "3".

**(Question: Investigator Harley: You advised that the EMS bus was dispatched to the scene. Did it transport any patients from the scene?)**

**Answer: Chief Hedlund:** Yes, the bus transported 5 patients.

**(Follow up Question: Investigator Harley: To where?)**

**Answer: Chief Hedlund:** Weiss Hospital

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Excluding the CTA fire marshal, were there any other CTA employees on the scene who were not victims in the accident?)**

**Answer: Chief Hedlund:** Not that I am aware of.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: What training have you received regarding handling rail related emergencies?)**

**Answer: Chief Hedlund:** There has been some training. Firefighters received training in throwing chains, and I have observed that. Training yes but very little and very limited.

### **Chief Keith Gray:**

Chief Gray advised that he arrived with the police. He was looking for a train that had struck a car. He followed the others into the yard. There was no one from CTA at the entrance and after waiting 3-4 minutes, and not knowing where to go, he observed people coming up the hill and followed it down to the train. He was on the west side of the train and observed Chief Hedlund who was having a face-to-face with Chief Jurewicz. Engine 102 was triaging and advised that 1 or 2 persons were still on board the train and at least one was critical. A second triage area was established at the top of the hill. The Plan 3 had gone into effect prior to Chief Gray's arrival on the scene. Firefighters were moving patients up the hill to the upper triage area.

Chief Gray advised that he did have some interaction with the CTA fire marshal who had identified himself as Mike. The chief advised that he ensured that all the critically injured were transported from the scene first. Once all the patients were transferred from below and up to the triage area, then transferred to ambulances for transport.



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Except for the fire marshal, did you see or interact with anyone else from CTA who was not a victim in the accident?)**

**Answer: Chief Gray: No, only the fire marshal.**

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Did you enter the train cars?)**

**Answer: No. I couldn't enter. We don't have (turnout gear)**

**(Follow up Question: Investigator Harley: You don't have personal protective equipment, PPE or turnouts?)**

**Additional: Chief Ferman: That's correct.**

**Additional: Chief Hernandez: EMS personnel are only issued helmets.**

**(Question: Investigator Harley: You advised that you arrived with the police. What were they doing on the scene?)**

**Answer: Chief Gray: I don't know.**

**Additional: Chief Hedlund: I didn't see them myself but one of them may have had the tourniquet that was applied to the injured person.**

**Answer: Chief Gray: I don't remember seeing them down at the train. I saw them in the yard.**

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Any thoughts about what could have been done differently or could have improved the response?)**

**Answer: Chief Gray: We need to address to CTA the issue about the address of the incident and the time it took to find the correct location. Someone "detailed" wouldn't have known where the various address locations are. The fire marshal was a good resource on the scene. I have never received any training related to emergencies on CTA or rail properties.**

**(Question: Investigator Harley to Chief Gray: That includes any training on the 3<sup>rd</sup> rail?)**

**Answer: Chief Gray: Yes**

**(Question: Investigator Harley to group: Does CFD have annual or mandatory recurrent training?)**

**Answer: Chief Ferman: Yes.**

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Is there anything that I should have asked you and failed to ask you?)**

**Answer: Chief Hedlund: No. In the academy they do go over some training with CTA.**

**Answer: Chief Gray: No**

The floor was opened to the group for questions and other commentary.

**Question: Chief Hernandez: About how did they know that the power was off?**



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

*Answer: Chief Hedlund: Heard battalion 9 request the secondary hold over the radio.*

Chief Hernandez commented that frequently chiefs will have a second radio which allows them to monitor multiple frequencies during a major incident.

Chief Hedlund acknowledged that she has a second radio and uses it. Chief Hernandez also advised that he has a second radio and uses it for scanning. Chief Ferman advised that it is easier for the chiefs to use two 800 hertz radios to monitor communications on a major incident and most chiefs do.

***Question: Chief Hernandez: Regarding the CTA fire marshal, how did you know who he was?***

*Answer: Chief Hedlund: He announced himself. He came over to me immediately.*

Other comments and general categories: Response:

Chief Hedlund commented that someone else should have been at the entrance to the yard when the other units arrived on the scene. Chief Gray commented that having someone that remains at the entrance to direct incoming personnel without going to the scene would have been very helpful.

Chief Hedlund advised that some individuals were aware that Clark turned into Chicago and came over the radio with that information to help direct other personnel. Chief Hedlund commented that everyone was there quickly and very think was handled very well. There was much of a delay. Chief Gray believed that everything went smoothly. He noted that it had been an especially hectic day with the graduation and the 3<sup>rd</sup> alarm fire.

Chief Ferman commented that he didn't go to the ceremony as well as most of the chiefs because of the various incidents taking place in Chicago that day.

Training:

Chief Hernandez discussed the value in providing EMS personnel with the opportunity to take a walk through.

After-Action Activities:

Chief Stinnett advised that the After-Action briefing took place within a week of the incident. Chief Ferman advised that one of the difficulties was that EMS and fire suppression personnel are on different schedules. Chief Hernandez commented that the personnel are on different platoons as well as shifts.

***(Question: Investigator Harley to the group: Who conducted the After-action briefing?)***



# NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

*Answer: (group): The After-action briefing occurred on a Sunday, possibly the 9<sup>th</sup> and was conducted by Chief Jurewicz.*

Chief Ferman noted that because of the varying schedules, the personnel that was on the scene of the incident would not work again for 12 days. This twelve-day cycle is the reason that a separate After-action briefing is held for fire suppression personnel.

Interview ended at 3:42 p.m.

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## End of Summary

I have reviewed this document and found it to be true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Keith Gray  
 Print  
 [Redacted] 564 3-11-2024  
 Date

Dave Hedlund  
 Print  
 [Redacted] 18110 3-11-2024  
 Date



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

I have reviewed this document and found it to be true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

*CYNTHIA MASTENG*

*[REDACTED]* *10/21* *3/14/2024*  
Signature Date

Print

Signature

Date





## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**Investigator name:** Sheryl Harley, Investigator, Survival Factors Group  
**Mode:** Railroad

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**Date:** December 19, 2023, at about 1155 a.m. (local time)  
**Interviewed:** Lieutenant Cynthia Moberg, Engine 59 CFD  
**NTSB Accident Number:** RRD24MR002

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**Narrative:** On Tuesday, December 19, 2023, at approximately 11:55 a.m., Investigator Harley interviewed Lieutenant Cynthia Moberg, Engine 59 at the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion headquarters located at 6030 N. Clark Street, Chicago, IL.

Below is a summary of the interview conducted with Lt. Moberg.

**Interviewed:** Lt. Cynthia Moberg, E-59

Lt. Moberg advised that she was the officer on Medic-Engine 59. During the initial response, there had been a discussion about the actual location of the incident. Units were staged at the corner of Howard Street and Chicago Avenue. Engine 59 pulled in behind Truck 47 and after grabbing the stokes basket entered the train yard. Lt. Moberg advised that once inside, the crew didn't know where to go but eventually "someone" came and pointed the crew "to the right". After which point, the individual walked away from the CFD personnel. The Lt. Moberg advised that upon arriving at the scene, she observed the two train cars and a vehicle that had a brush at one end. There were several CTA employees standing against the wall. Lt. Moberg advised that Engine 59's crew went to the first train car but were not needed there. They continued to the second train car and found 3 people still inside. *(Interview paused at 12:01 p.m. E-59 dispatched to priority run)*

Interview resumed at 1:39 p.m.

The lieutenant advised that after going to the first train car and finding that they were not required there, the crew moved to the second car. Inside that train car were two CPD officers. The remaining passengers inside were all yellows. Lt. Moberg described the individuals as a Hispanic male, she observed lying on the floor of the car, who required a stokes basket to be removed from the scene. A female CTA employee and a gentleman with long braids were observed sitting in the seats. A stokes basket was used to remove the gentleman and a scoop



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

stretcher was used to remove the female victim. Two members of the squad helped to package up the victims and remove them from the train car.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: To help me place individuals within the car, can you tell me where the Hispanic male was located?)**

**Answer: Lt. Moberg: The gentleman was lying in the middle of the car, near the doors, on the floor.**

**(Question: Investigator Harley: And the location of the other two passengers?)**

**Answer: Lt. Moberg: The CTA worker was sitting on the right with her back to me. The gentleman was sitting across, looking towards me, sitting across the bench seats.**

**(Questions: Investigator Harley: What was the chief complaint of the CTA employee?)**

**Answer: Lt. Moberg: I don't remember.**

**(Question Investigator Harley: And the chief complaint for the gentleman?)**

**Answer: Lt. Moberg: Knee and leg.**

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Do you remember if the windows in the front of the car were intact or broken?)**

**Answer: Lt. Moberg: No, intact. A firefighter came walking through the first car and tried to come in through the door between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> car. I blocked the door and told him not to come in because we had people on the floor. I didn't see any broken windows.**

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Did you speak to anyone that told you anything about what happened?)**

**Answer: Lt. Moberg: No**

**(Question: Investigator Harley: I want to talk to you about the CTA employees you saw standing against the wall, who were they? Did you talk to them?)**

**Answer: Lt. Moberg: No idea. They were wearing vests and jackets.**

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Did you encounter any difficulties during the rescue operation?)**

**Answer: Lt. Moberg: Finding where the incident was. It was a heck of a time getting up that hill. Also, we were originally told that there were 10 victims but that wasn't correct, there were more. It took a lot of manpower to carry all the patients up the steep hill in stokes baskets.**

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Lieutenant, have you ever received any training on handling rail emergencies?)**

**Answer: Lt. Moberg: Yes. I received training in "Chain out" operations.**



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**(Question: Investigator Harley: And does that include being able to recognize the third rail?)**

**Answer: Lt. Moberg: Yes. It does change in certain areas.**

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Did you receive any assistance from CTA on the scene? Were they helpful in providing the necessary information you needed to conduct your operation?)**

**Answer: Lt. Moberg: No, I didn't speak with anyone from CTA.**

**(Question: Investigator Harley: If you could change anything to improve the incident response, do you have any suggestions?)**

**Answer: Lt. Moberg: Better location information. The initial call was a train versus a car, but the location provided didn't make sense. Then we received the location as the train yard. Someone did open the gates but there was no one there to show us where to go. We had to look around for a while to find it. The assigned engineer knew the location of the train yard and that it was the only location where a train could possibly hit a car (since the area is all elevated),**

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Were there any passengers that required special extrication, such as entrapment?)**

**Answer: Lt. Moberg: No. There was no special extrication required. Two were serious.**

**(Question: Investigator Harley: When you entered the train car, were the lights on?)**

**Answer: Lt. Moberg: No**

**(Follow up Question: Investigator Harley: Do you know if the train car was equipped with emergency lighting?)**

**Answer: Lt. Moberg: I don't know. I don't recall.**

**(Investigator Harley: Were you required to use flashlights to conduct operations inside of the car or was there available natural lighting?)**

**Answer: Lt. Moberg: There was enough natural lighting.**

**(Question: Investigator Harley: When did you know that the power was cut to the track, or did you hear over the radio that the track was de-energized?)**

**Answer: Lt. Moberg: I heard over the radio Battalion 9 requesting a secondary hold and I also observed crews chaining out.**

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Do you have some sense of how long it took from the time of your arrival to the last patient being removed from the scene?)**

**Answer: Lt. Moberg: No idea. It was non-stop work.**

**(Question: Investigator Harley: When you first arrived at the second train car, were the doors open or closed?)**



# NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

*Answer: Lt. Moberg: The two doors as you approached the car were open because there was a ladder there and I had to climb the ladder to enter the car.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Where was Engine 59 located on the scene?)**

*Answer: Lt. Moberg: We were two rigs behind the entrance gate to the train yard.*

**(Follow up Question: Investigator Harley: To confirm, where was that gate?)**

*Answer: Lt. Moberg: The Chicago Avenue gate.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: When you arrived at the gate, there was no one from CTA there to direct you?)**

*Answer: Lt. Moberg: We walked into the fence/gate and continued to walk until we saw a worker who pointed to the right.*

**(Follow up Question: Investigator Harley: What was this CTA employee doing?)**

*Answer: Lt. Moberg: He was just walking towards the gate.*

**(Follow up Question: Investigator Harley: So, how did you get to the accident site?)**

*Answer: Lt. Moberg: We followed the sidewalk to the right, down the hill and round a bend and saw the train.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Is there anything that I should have asked you and didn't?)**

*Answer: Lt. Moberg: No. Fortunately, our engineers knew the area and where it was. They knew that Clark turned into Chicago by Evanston.*

Interview ended at 2:15 p.m.

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## End of Summary

I have reviewed this document and found it to be true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

*Clint Moberg*

Print

[Redacted Signature]

*10591*

*3/14/24*

Signature

Date



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**Investigator name:** Sheryl Harley, Investigator, Survival Factors Group  
**Mode:** Railroad

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**Date:** December 18, 2023, at about 3:44 p.m. (local time)  
**Interviewed:** Deputy Fire Commissioner Juan Hernandez and District Chief of EMS Operations Gregory Stinnett  
**NTSB Accident Number:** RRD24MR002

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**Narrative:** On Monday, December 18, 2023, at about 3:44 p.m. Investigator Harley interviewed Assistant Deputy Fire Commissioner Juan Hernandez and District Chief of EMS Operations Gregory Stinnett at the Battalion 9 headquarters located at 6030 N. Clark Street, Chicago, IL. Also in attendance was Deputy Fire Commissioner Marc Ferman.

A summary of the interview with Assistant Deputy Fire Commissioner Hernandez and District Chief Stinnett is provided below.

### **District Chief Stinnett:**

Chief Stinnett advised that he was monitoring the radio and heard the call go out for a train versus an automobile. The chief was at Roosevelt and Canal and did not immediately respond. The chief reported that there was some confusion as to where the incident location was. Shortly after the initial call was put out, the EMS Plan 1 was initiated. The chief advised that Plan 1 includes the response of 5 ambulances, an EMS chief and fire suppression units for support. Chief Stinnett advised that he heard the Plan 2 being announced and at that time responded to the incident. The chief noted that two other incidents were in progress at the same time. A "3-11" Fire with hazardous materials and EMS south was being used and the CTA Bus and "Pin in" with an EMS Plan 1 in effect at the location of Roosevelt and Columbus. Chief Stinnett advised that responding units didn't know how to access the scene and the location kept changing. Chief Jurewicz eventually elevated the response to an EMS Plan 3.

Arriving at the entrance of the rail yard, Chief Stinnett observed Chief Hernandez and Chief Valez, who is the Deputy District Chief Special Events Coordinator. Tarps had been laid out for triage, the red and yellow were close together and the green were off to themselves. Chief Stinnett responded down to the location of the train and met with Chief Hedlund and Chief Gray. By that time all the critically injured patients had been removed. All the victims had been removed from the train and no one was left in the surrounding track area. The chief advised that there was an elderly male in the triage area and that a request for a stokes basket was made to



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

move him. The chief advised that walking up the steep incline was difficult due to the “river rocks”. CTA and CPD personnel were assisting firefighters with moving the victims with stokes baskets using a hand off to pass the victims up the hill. Ambulances were brought into the yard and to the *casualty collection tarps* for transport. The triage team at the train accounted for all the victims and ensured that they were removed from the scene and transferred up to the tarps. 8812 arrived on the scene and staged at Howard and Clark Streets. CPD assisted with the 3 or 4 walking wounded (green category) who needed assistance. The Field Chief directed these individuals to the bus for transport. By that time only one yellow was left at the tarp but was removed and only the 5 greens (CTA employees) who had initially refused transport but changed their mind and wanted to be seen at the hospital remained on site. The CTA employees were also walked to the bus, 8812, to be transported from the scene. The Command Van communicated with Fire Alarm Center and the hospitals to determine their ability to accept incoming patients. Chief Stinnett advised that on the scene he had a face-to face with Chief Hernandez as well as the Incident Commander, Chief Jurewicz.

The following week, the After-action briefing was conducted with the CPD Captain of the 24<sup>th</sup> District Police Station, the sergeant that applied the tourniquet, the CTA Safety Fire Marshal, the Chief of the Evanston Fire Department and chief officers and company officers from CFD.

Chief Stinnett advised that CFD was contacted by CTA regarding their employees. Two women from CTA risk-management wanted to discuss what information CFD would be releasing to the media. The CTA risk management officers voiced concerns about information being released regarding their employees. Chief Stinnett advised that any press brief would contain the basic incident information and would not include the identities of the CTA employees involved.

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Were there other CTA employees on the scene, not including the injured?)***

*Answer: Chief Stinnett: Yes. There were CTA employees down in the track area. They were wearing vests. Along with the police officers on the scene, they assisted people up the hill.*

***(Questions: Investigator Harley: Were the five injured CTA employees still on the scene at that time?)***

*Answer: Chief Stinnett: I want to say yes.*

*Answer: Chief Hernandez: Yes, they were.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Did you talk to any of the CTA employees involved in the accident?)***

*Answer: Chief Stinnett: No, I did not.*



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

*(Question: Investigator Harley: Is there anything that you can think of that I should have asked you but didn't?)*

*Answer: Chief Stinnett: No, not that I could think of.*

### **Chief Juan Hernandez:**

Chief Hernandez advised that he doesn't recall the exact time, but he remembered that he and Chief Velez were on Lake Shore heading south. The chief advised that the incident started as an EMS Plan 1. There had been some confusion because it was initially reported as CTA versus a car. About 5 minutes later, the Plan 2 was announced, and Chief Hernandez advised that at that time, he turned around and started heading north. The chief advised that he was monitoring the fire suppression radio and over that radio heard Battalion 9 turn all the companies around, telling them to proceed on Clark which turns into Chicago and that the entrance was off Chicago. The same message had been relayed over the EMS channel. Chief Hernandez advised that because of Battalion 9's excellent instructions, units knew that Clark turned into Chicago. On the scene, apparatus was observed parked in the Mobile gas station and 3 or 4 ambulances were on the scene and facing south. He spoke to PIC Daughtery who had been assigned as the staging officer before going into the yard. Chief Velez followed him in. Also on the scene were Chief Gray and Chief Deldotto (453). (453)

Ambulance stretchers were parked off to the side. Battalion 9 gave a size up of the scene and Chief Hernandez helped set up the casualty collection point (CCP). Chief Velez was assigned transport officer. PIC Daughtery would handle telemetry, destination, and communications with the hospital. Chief Hernandez advised that he and Chief Velez had previously worked a mass casualty incident together so were practiced in coordinating efforts. The chief advised that the recent "Active Shooter" training had helped to prepare personnel for this mass casualty incident. Ambulance Commander Limbo had already brought out the triage tarps in preparation for victims. When Chief Hernandez heard that personnel were running out of stokes baskets; he advised the ambulance crews to bring in their skeds. Chief Hernandez advised that when he arrived on the scene, the first category red patient had already been transported. The second red victim, an elderly male was on the tarp. Chief Gray advised that 6 yellows would be coming up top to the CCP and several greens came up to include the two pediatric patients, their mother, and the CTA employees who had initially refused. All those individuals that refused were documented. Another red and 9 more yellows arrived at the casualty collection area next. All the reds and most of the yellows were transported off the scene with some greens remaining. 451 (Jones) and Chief Stinnett used the bus to transport those greens, who had initially refused but changed their minds. Chief Hernandez advised that some duplication occurred because of individuals that initially refused transport but later changed their minds.

Communications at the scene went through the Command Van. In addition to law enforcement officers from CPD, officers from the City of Evanston were also on the scene.



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

However, no resources from the City of Evanston Fire Department were present. The chief advised that no fire department resources (from Evanston) were on the scene.

After all the victims were transported from the scene, Chief Hernandez advised that along with Chief Gray, he went down to view the scene (the train). Chief Hernandez described the hill that the emergency responders had to climb while carrying patients was on a 35-degree incline (approximately) with rocks that made the footing slippery. He noted that stokes baskets were very useful but having skeds proved to be a valuable tool.

Chief Hernandez advised that he had made several observations and developed some take-aways from the incident. One issue was the constant request from law enforcement for an update on the number of victims. This task was given to Chief Velez to update law enforcement on the victims. Law enforcement officers on the scene were a great help to CFD due to the terrain and the inability to use stretchers. The media had to be removed from the casualty collection point. The incident illustrated the need to provide "walk throughs" to EMS personnel as well as fire suppression personnel. CFD will develop a PowerPoint presentation for the local hospitals to provide discussion on the incident and the lessons learned.

A final accounting of the victims in the accident to include their injury classification and the medical facility was provided. The final count was 3 Reds, 9 Yellows and 11 Green. The injury classifications and the receiving medical facilities were 2 Reds, and 3 Greens were received at St. Francis Hospital, 1 Red and 2 Yellows were received by Advocate Masonic Hospital, 2 Yellows and 3 Greens were received at Swedish Covenant Hospital, 1 Yellow and 5 Greens were received at Weiss Memorial Hospital and 4 Yellows were transported to St. Joseph's Hospital.

Interview ended at 4:28 p.m.

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**End of Summary**





## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

I have reviewed this document and found it to be true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Juan C. Hernandez

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3-12-24

Date

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Signature

Date



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**Investigator name: Sheryl Harley, Investigator, Survival Factors Group**  
**Mode: Railroad**

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**Date: December 18, 2023, at about 2:14 p.m. (local time)**  
**Interviewed: Paramedic-in-Charge Andrea Emery and Fire Paramedic Lauren Hardt**  
**NTSB Accident Number: RRD24MR002**

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**Narrative:** On Monday, December 18, 2023, at about 2:14 p.m., Investigator Harley conducted the interview with Paramedic in Charge (PIC) Andrea Emery and Fire Paramedic (FPM) Lauren Hardt at the Battalion 9 headquarters located at 6030 N. Clark Street, Chicago, IL. Also in attendance was Deputy Fire Commissioner Marc Ferman, Assistant Deputy Fire Commissioner Juan Hernandez and Chief Gregory Stinnett, District Chief EMS Operations.

A summary of the interview with PIC Emery and FPM Hardt is provided below.

PIC Emery:

The PIC advised that the ambulance was at the hospital and the crew was cleaning up from the previous run when the call came in. Dispatched were Ambulance 40, 46 and 32. The crew advised that Dave Daugherty was the Staging Officer. The crew contacted 452 and were told to bring their equipment up to the scene. They had to leave the cot at the top of the hill. The crew went down to assist with triage.

FPM Hardt:

The CTA Fire Marshal approached the crew. He advised that he had already started triaging and told them that there were 21 greens patients.

PIC Emery:

The crew made visual contact with 452 and 4411, Assistant Deputy Chief Gray, and were ordered to start triaging to get a general idea of the number of injured and the categories. Most were green with some yellow. The crew determined the injuries and if the individual wanted to be transported to the hospital. A triage area was set up at the top of the hill and the victims were moved up to that area for more definitive care. Ambulances were being brought in, where patients were loaded for transport to the hospital. Chief Juan Hernandez was also on scene.



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Can you repeat which EMS units were on the scene? And when was the incident EMS Plan elevated?)**

*Answer: FPM Hardt: 40, 32 and 46. (Both) The EMS Plan was elevated fairly quickly due to the scope of the incident.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: You mentioned that the CTA Fire Marshal had approached you and indicated that he had started triage. Who is he?)**

*Answer: FPM Hardt: Yes, he did. I don't know who he is.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Did either of you interact with any of the injured CTA employees?)**

*Answer: FPM Hardt: Yes, but none of them were critical. Only a few bumps.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Is it accurate to say that the CTA employees you interacted with were all green?)**

*Answer PIC Emery: That's correct. Answer: FPM Hardt: Yes*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Were you ever in front of the "snow fighter"?)**

*Answer: (Both): The rear*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Excluding the CTA Fire Marshal, did you interact with any other CTA employee on the scene?)**

*Answer: (Both): No*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Did you see any of the victims that had been classified as red?)**

*Answer: (Both): No*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Did either of you enter the train cars?)**

*Answer: (Both): No*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Where did you say that Ambulance 46 was during the incident?)**

*Answer: PIC Emery: Staging on Chicago Avenue, by the Mobile gas station, north of Howard Avenue.*



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**(Question: Investigator Harley: What crews were operating down at the track level?)**

*Answer: PIC Emery: 40 and ourselves. The patients were then taken to the triage area.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Have either of you ever received training in emergency operations with train or on the tracks?)**

*Answer: (Both): No*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Please correct me if this is inaccurate, you were in the triage area at the top of the hill in the rail yard and not down in the track or adjacent to the train?)**

*Answer: PIC Emery: We were standing outside of the train car on the tracks.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Have you ever responded to a rail related emergency before?)**

*Answer: PIC Emery: I have had no formal training, but I have responded to several incidents in the past.*

**(Follow up Question: Investigator Harley: What type of incidents and how many?)**

*Answer: PIC Emery: In my thirteen years with CFD, I have responded to about 100 calls related to persons on the track. That is the number that I personally responded to.*

**(Follow up Question: Investigator Harley: How many train derailments have you responded to?)**

*Answer: PIC Emery: About a half dozen.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: On the day of this incident, were you told that the power had been shut off?)**

*Answer: PIC Emery: We were notified right away that the power was shut off and the tracks were locked by CFD fire.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Did you have to crossover the tracks during your operation down at the train?)**

*Answer: PIC Emery: We had to crossover the tracks several times to move the patients.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Who is Chief 4411)**

*Answer: PIC Emery: Chief Keith Gray*



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Is there anything that you would have liked to see done differently or anything that you believe could have improved the operation?)**

Answer: FPM Hardt: Logistically, the location was difficult because of the unstable ground and having to move patients but everyone did a fantastic job.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Did you have all the resources you needed?)**

Answer: (Both): Yes, absolutely.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Is there anything that I should have asked about the incident and didn't?)**

Answer: (Both) No Ma'am.

(The floor was opened for questions.)

**(Question: Chief Ferman: You said you thought that everything went fantastic, thinking over your 13 years and about the implementation of the EMS Plan in this incident....?)**

Answer: PIC Emery: I think that the resources were quickly allocated to the incident. Logistics and planning went well, everyone worked well together, and patients were moved quickly from the scene.

**(Question: Chief Hernandez to FF/PM Hardt: How many years do you have on?)**

Answer: FPM Hardt: 6 years

**(Question: Chief Hernandez to FF/PM Hardt: Have you ever responded to a train derailment before this?)**

Answer: FPM Hardt: No

**(Question: Chief Hernandez: Have you ever participated in any walk throughs?)**

Answer: PIC Emery: No, but we absolutely could benefit from that.

**(Question: Chief Hernandez: You said that you had to leave the stretchers at the top of hill, what equipment did you use to move patients?)**

Answer: PIC Emery: Skeds and Stokes. We were positioned off Chicago Avenue and across the bridge. There was a Green #8 sign at the location. The fire department carried the patients up the hill on stokes to the triage area.



# NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**(Question: Chief Hernandez: When you went down to the train, how did you get to it?)**

Answer: PIC Emery: We came down the embankment on the east side.

**(Question: Chief Hernandez: Can you identify the 3<sup>rd</sup> Rail?)**

Answer: PIC Emery: No. Answer: FPM Hardt: No, I honestly can't.

**(Question: Chief Stinnett: Are you aware when the firefighters are going to do a walk through?)**

Answer: PIC Emery: I don't know. We are not in our house very often.

(Chief Stinnett commented that when the firefighters conducted these drills that they may want to notify the chief.)

**(Question: Chief Hernandez: You said that there was a CTA Fire Marshal on the scene. How did you know he was a fire marshal?)**

Answer: FPM Hardt: 452 said so. She had already spoken to him.

Interview ended at 2:43 p.m.

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## End of Summary

I have reviewed this document and found it to be true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

X	ANDREA EMERY		
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Signature			Date



# NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**Investigator name: Sheryl Harley, Investigator, Survival Factors Group**

**Mode: Rail**

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**Date: December 18, 2023, at 1:40 p.m. (local time)**

**Interviewee: Kevin Brennan, Ambulance 40 Officer, CFD**

**NTSB Accident Number: RRD24MR002**

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**Narrative:** On Monday, December 18, 2023, at about 1:40 p.m., Kevin Brennan, Officer of Ambulance 40, was interviewed by Investigator Harley at the Battalion 9 headquarters located at 6030 N. Clark Street, Chicago, IL. Also in attendance was Deputy Fire Commissioner of Operations, Marc Ferman and Assistant Deputy Fire Commissioner Juan Hernandez.

A summary of the interview with Paramedic Kevin Brennan is provided below.

## **Paramedic Kevin Brennan**

At the time of dispatch, Paramedic Brennan advised that he and his unit were at St. Francis Hospital. He advised that he heard the EMS Plan 1 being initiated regarding the derailment. Ambulance 32 was also at the hospital, and both units responded to the scene together. Ambulance 56 and 31, also ALS units, responded and all the units staged at the Mobile Gas station. Engine 102, Battalion 9 and 452 walked into the rail yard gate. Ambulance 46 was command of the staging area. Ambulance 56 and 31 were assigned triage.

Paramedic Brennan advised that he had no idea where the actual scene was and there was no one present from CTA to assist. Battalion 9 came over the radio and advised that they had two critically injured victims as well as two ambulatory patients. The crews of Ambulance 40 and 32 gathered their equipment and headed down to the scene. Upon arriving at the location, Paramedic Brennan advised that the second patient was still down and underneath the equipment. The paramedic advised that they were unable to bring their cots down due to the terrain and that they didn't have a stokes basket but did have the use of scoop stretchers. The stokes baskets were brought to the scene later. The paramedic described the scene as fairly chaotic.

452 and Ambulance 40's crew started triage and Ambulance 56 came down to the scene to assist. The paramedic remembered that the door to the first train car was open, and he could see the tourniquet that had been applied to the leg of one of the train car occupants. This individual was triaged as a Red. In addition to the red patient underneath the snowplow, one other red patient was identified. Green patients were placed to one side while the EMS crews



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

attended to the yellows. The red patients were removed first along with some of the yellows. The last patient to leave the area of the track bed were all the greens and a few remaining yellows. The crews found that the east side of the yard was easier to traverse. Paramedic Brennan advised that he stayed on the scene with Ambulance 56 until all the patients were evacuated. 4-4-11 and 452 were still on scene. Ambulance 31 was at the casualty collection points for secondary triage. Assistant Chief Limbo took over the collection.

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Describe how you accessed the scene.)***

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: Once you enter the rail yard, you go up the hill and around before you descend the hill to the tracks. I saw the train car with damage and intrusion into the car. The snowplow didn't look heavily damaged. Battalion 9, 452 and Squad 2 went down to the scene. There was one individual from CTA, and I asked about whether the power was out several times and received no answer. I asked the lieutenant from Engine 71, or it may have been from Engine 102 about whether the power was shut off. I heard "put the chains on and cut the power" come over the radio.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Did you have any idea who the individual from CTA was?)***

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: No Clue. He had a vest and a lanyard on. I didn't speak with any CTA official. I didn't know who to speak to. No one on scene designated themselves as a representative from CTA. Field Chief 452 was on the scene and would handle that conversation. My job was to help with triage.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Who is 452?)***

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: Director Second District Chief, Dawn Hedlund, \*Paramedic Field Chief for the Second District.*

*(Clarification by Chief Hernandez: She is the Second District EMS Chief)*

*(\*Paramedic Brennan provided the correct title of District Chief Hedlund after the interview.)*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: What interaction did you have with the CTA employees on the snowplow?)***

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: None. I didn't see any of those crew members. Basically, I went to the chief and was told to start triaging.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: When you entered the first car, how many passengers were still inside?)***

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: I can't enter the train car. I don't have any gear. From the outside, I could see that there were three occupants still left in the car. There was an individual, a woman, laying on the east side of the train west facing seats. She was on her back with her knees up. There was a person lying on the ground with a leg injury and another person farther back, that was a green. A firefighter walked in and checked. He had protective gear.*





## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Can you tell me where the victims were located within the car?)***

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: The person with the tourniquet I believe was a CTA employee and he was in the front of the train car. The woman was inside of the second door, first seat across from the door, westside and she was facing east. She was on her back with her knees up. Women were also laying on the east side of the train on the west facing seats.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Can you describe her to me?)***

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: B/F/ 40's-50's, she was moving, alert and oriented.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Describe the passenger that was in the rear of the train car)***

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: The person in the back, I could hear him. The fire crew inside just said he was a green, but I couldn't see him. The platform door is at my back.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: How tall are you?)***

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: 6'4*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Who is Battalion Chief 9?)***

*Answer: Chief Ferman Chief Matt Douwdall.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Can you explain to me how the EMS Plan work. What is EMS Plan 1?)***

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: The plan provides a standard response to an EMS incident based on the number of injured. Plan 2 provides additional resources. This was a Plan 3, and it added a significant amount of resources.*

*Additional by Chief Ferman: The increases in resources go up in increments of 5. The Plans provide a standardized response of EMS equipment, chief officers as well as the addition of fire suppression units in support of the response.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: You mentioned that you did not have a stokes basket, what procedures were put in place to help with the transfer of patients from the track level to ambulances?)***

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: Trying to get up the incline with the rocks and the steep slope required the use of backboards with skeds and scoop stretchers. We also had the availability of stair chairs for individuals who were unable to walk.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: You advised that there were three reds, do you know what the final number for yellow and green patients were?)***

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: At this point, no.*



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Have you ever received any training with CTA or CFD regarding operations around tracks or train equipment?)**

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: In the academy, we went to CTA for a course on their buses.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Did CTA provide any instruction on their trains?)**

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: CTA talked a little about their trains but that was a couple of years ago and I don't really remember.*

**(Question: Chief Hernandez: When did you go through the academy?)**

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: I went through the academy March 2021. The training was conducted at the south headquarters for CTA.*

**(Questions: Investigator Harley: Do you have comment or suggestions on how the operation could have been improved?)**

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: I think everyone did a fantastic job. There were a few little hiccups but all in all, it was a job well done.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: What about the personnel at CTA?)**

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: I do not know about that. I was involved with patient care. The only concern I had about CTA was ensuring that the power was shut off.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Do you have a sense of how long it took before the last patient left the scene?)**

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: The last patient left with Ambulance 40. We transported the individual after all the other patients were transported and we were relieved from triage duties. Everything was completed in a timely manner.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Can you describe this patient or where the individual came from?)**

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: Where he was located, no. He was a mobile green patient that was re-established as a yellow. We took him to Weiss Memorial. He was a W/M/30's/alert and oriented. He was in stable condition with clear head spaces but had multiple complaints.*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Any visible injuries?)**

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: No visible injuries*

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Can you think of any question that I didn't ask and should have asked you about this incident?)**

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: No*



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

***(Chief Ferman: How many live tracks did you have to cross?)***

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: Zero*

***(Chief Hernandez: How many actual tracks did you have to cross)***

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: The tracks at the tunnel and crossed the loop track.*

***(Question: Chief Hernandez: Can you identify the third rail? Additional qualifier by Chief Ferman: Did you ever learn how to recognize the third rail?)***

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: The third rail is larger and is up and further away.*

***(Question: Chief Hernandez: Where did you get the last patient?)***

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: Collection Point Yellow. There was a green still there, but he was a refusal. There were multiple greens left on the scene. I do not know the number of refusals or the number that were transported.*

***(Question: Investigator Harley: Who was in charge of this last green patient?)***

*Answer: Paramedic Brennan: Ambulance 31*

Chief Ferman noted that 60 CFD personnel were deployed during the Plan 3.

**Interview ended at 2:12 p.m.**

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**End of Summary**

I have reviewed this document and found it to be true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

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Signature

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Date