

# NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Vehicle Recorder Division  
Washington, D.C. 20594

November 25, 2019

## Mobile Phone Records

### Specialist's Factual Report

By Charles Cates

#### 1. EVENT SUMMARY

Location: Estill, South Carolina  
Date: November 30, 2018  
Company: CSX Railroad  
NTSB Number: RRD19FR002  
Summary: Refer to the Accident Summary report, within this docket.

#### 2. DETAILS OF RECORDS INVESTIGATION

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Vehicle Recorder Division received mobile phone records associated with the following phone numbers:

**User:** Engineer  
**Service Provider:** Verizon

**User:** Conductor  
**Service Provider:** Verizon

**User:** Welder  
**Service Provider:** Verizon

**User:** Watchman  
**Service Provider:** Verizon

The mobile phone records were obtained via subpoena issued by the NTSB Office of the General Counsel. At the direction of the NTSB Investigator in Charge (IIC), each set of records was examined for indications of usage between 7 AM and 10:30 AM eastern standard time (EST) on the day of the accident, November 30, 2018.

##### 2.1. Mobile Phone Records Description

Mobile phone records are produced by a telecommunications service provider documenting the details of telephone calls, text messages, picture/video messages, data usage, and other transactions. The exact information provided varies depending on the provider. Some activity such as data usage and certain text messages may be automatic background data activity by the device's operating system (OS) or installed applications and not indicative of user-initiated

activities. In addition, there were some sent text messages that appeared to be repeated based upon time stamps but were included for completeness.

## **2.2. Engineer Phone**

There was one outgoing call at 10:29:24 EST for 87 seconds.

There were two text messages sent, one at 8:42:55 EST and one at 8:54:31 EST.

## **2.3. Conductor Phone**

From 10:23:18 EST to 10:30 EST there were three outgoing calls including one call to 911 for 66 seconds.

There was one text message sent at 10:16:58 EST and one text message received at 10:17:01 EST.

## **2.4. Welder Phone**

There were no phone calls.

There were two text messages sent, one at 7:59:53 EST and one at 8:35:12 EST. These messages were consistent with background OS generated messages.

## **2.5. Watchman Phone**

There were six outgoing phone calls. The first was at 7:45:19 EST for 71 seconds, the second was at 7:48:11 EST for 25 seconds, the third was at 10:23:12 for 4 seconds, the fourth was at 10:23:47 for 27 seconds, the fifth was at 10:26:18 for 2 seconds, and the sixth was at 10:27:08 for 49 seconds.

Table 1 details the Watchman Phone sent and received text messages. Note some text messages may be initiated by the phone OS and not representative of user input, however they are indicative of the phone being powered on.

**Table 1. Text message activity from Watchman phone.**

Time Range EST	Number of Sent Text Messages	Number of Received Text Messages
7:25-7:30	4	3
7:30-7:35	13	5
7:35-7:40	3	1
7:55-8:00	1	0
8:00-8:05	3	1
8:05-8:10	1	1
8:10-8:15	1	0
8:20-8:25	0	3
8:25-8:30	1	0
8:35-8:40	7	1
8:40-8:45	3	1
8:45-8:50	1	1
8:50-8:55	1	1
10:05-10:10	0	2