

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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SEPTA TRAIN CRASH  
UPPER DARBY, PENNSYLVANIA  
AUGUST 22, 2017

\* Accident No.: DCA17FP012

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: THEODORE D. MILLS

SEPTA Headquarters  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Wednesday,  
August 23, 2017

## APPEARANCES:

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National Transportation Safety Board

STEPHEN JENNER, Ph.D., Human Performance Investigator  
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I N D E X

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I N T E R V I E W

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2 MR. TORRES: This is a NTSB informal interview. My name is  
3 Tomas Torres, T-o-m-a-s, T-o-r-r-e-s. Today's date is August 23,  
4 2017. We're at SEPTA Headquarters in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania,  
5 interviewing transportation manager in connection with an accident  
6 that occurred at Upper Darby, on August 22, 2017. The NTSB  
7 Accident Number is DCA17FR012.

8 The purpose of the investigation is to increase safety, not  
9 to assign fault, blame or liability. NTSB cannot offer any  
10 guarantee of confidentiality or immunity from legal or certificate  
11 actions. A transcript or summary of the interview will go into  
12 the public docket.

13 The interviewee can have one representative of the  
14 interviewee's choice. Do you have somebody?

15 MR. MILLS: All my superiors are here.

16 MR. TORRES: Okay. Do you understand that this interview is  
17 being recorded?

18 MR. MILLS: Yes.

19 MR. TORRES: Please state your name and spell it?

20 MR. MILLS: Theodore David Mills, T-h-e-o-d-o-r-e, D-a-v-i-d,  
21 M-i-l-l-s.

22 MR. TORRES: Thank you.

23 Steve.

24 DR. JENNER: Stephen Jenner, S-t-e-p-h-e-n, J-e-n-n-e-r, with  
25 the NTSB.

1 MR. REYNOLDS: John Reynolds, J-o-h-n, R-e-y-n-o-l-d-s,  
2 SEPTA.

3 MS. ANGOTTA: Linda Angotta, L-i-n-d-a, A-n-g-o-t-t-a, SEPTA.

4 MR. HARRIS: Waverly Harris, W-a-v-e-r-l-y, H-a-r-r-i-s,  
5 SMART General Chairman.

6 MR. CASSITY: Jared Cassity, J-a-r-e-d, C-a-s-s-i-t-y,  
7 Representative for the National Safety Team, on the SMART  
8 Transportation Division.

9 MR. YOUNG: James Young, J-a-m-e-s, Y-o-u-n-g, with PennDOT's  
10 Rail Transit Safety Review Program.

11 MS. BONINI: Beth Bonini, B-e-t-h, B-o-n-i-n-i, with  
12 PennDOT's State Safety Oversight.

13 MR. GOOD: George Good, G-e-o-r-g-e, G-o-o-d, Federal Transit  
14 Administration.

15 MR. TORRES: Okay. Tomas Torres with the NTSB. You say your  
16 name is David?

17 MR. MILLS: Theodore David, my middle name.

18 MR. TORRES: Oh, Theodore.

19 MR. MILLS: I go by Ted.

20 MR. TORRES: Ted, okay. Do you mind if we call you by your  
21 first name, Ted?

22 MR. MILLS: Yeah, that's fine.

23 INTERVIEW OF THEODORE D. MILLS

24 BY MR. TORRES:

25 Q. Ted, can you please tell us your history, a brief --

1 A. With SEPTA?

2 Q. Yeah.

3 A. Started part-time as a traffic checker in 1978 while I was  
4 still in high school. Full-time as a revenue attendant in 1980.  
5 Became an operator in 1981. Transportation manager in 1987.

6 Q. So you've been a manager, a transportation manager since  
7 1987?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Okay. On the date of the incident, can you tell us, you  
10 know, what you went to work and your on duty time?

11 A. Yeah. I was on the 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. shift, came on duty at  
12 10 p.m. You want other assignments before the incident?

13 Q. Yeah, just tell how your day was leading up to the accident.

14 A. Prior to the accident, I had one assignment at about 11:50  
15 p.m. I had to pick up an operator at 69th Street on Bus Route  
16 113. He had a random drug test and I needed to get him the  
17 paperwork, and see that he got on the yellow to come down here to  
18 medical at 12:30 for his test.

19 After that was done, I was sitting in the south terminal in  
20 my vehicle entering just the information for what I had done up to  
21 that point on my pad with -- for my daily report. I was in the  
22 south terminal when the call came in about the accident.

23 Q. And where is the south terminal?

24 A. 69th Street, Market Street side of 69th Street.

25 Q. Okay. So when you got the call, what was reported to you?

1 A. All the controller said on the radio was two cars crashed  
2 into each other on one track, no further information. I asked for  
3 which one track where? I didn't immediately get an answer. So I  
4 was closest to the west terminal. So I went by there first  
5 thinking one track meeting Sharon Hill. There was no cars in the  
6 terminals. So I continued around Victory Avenue and the access  
7 road to the north terminal closest to the Norristown High Speed  
8 Line platforms.

9 Once I got there, I grabbed my pad and my vest, went up to  
10 the platform. SEPTA police were already on the platform by the  
11 time I got there. They were probably the officers that were in  
12 the terminal. The two cars were there. There were several  
13 passengers on the platform at that point. The Transit Police were  
14 starting to help them out.

15 Shortly thereafter, I don't know exactly how long, it wasn't  
16 very long, the fire personnel and the medics arrived, and then I  
17 just started trying to piece together what was going on and what  
18 had actually happened.

19 Q. So what did you find out on scene?

20 A. From the two operators that were on the platform, Omarr Hill  
21 and Sean Jackson, they said there -- 148 car had been on the A  
22 berth closest to the -- entering into the platform, and 155 car  
23 had come in on 1 track and hit 148, pushed it -- and pushed 148 to  
24 the B berth. At first, I wasn't sure exactly how they came  
25 together because of the way the two cars were sitting, it looked

1 like we -- they were in the positions where we would normally have  
2 two cars, the way they were sitting. The damage on the cars,  
3 because it's a little dark in there, it really wasn't, you know, I  
4 didn't notice it as I was walking up until I actually went and  
5 looked to see how bad the damage was to the cars.

6 After that, it was just a matter of the medic personnel were  
7 taking care of the injured passengers. I was not able to talk to  
8 the operator on the scene. Medics were working on him, and the  
9 fire captain, when I -- every time I tried to go to the car to see  
10 if I could get any information about the operator, the fire  
11 captain grabbed me with another question. So I was pretty much  
12 kept busy on the platform at that point.

13 A couple of updates from -- to the control center of what was  
14 going on, short cryptic stuff really. Just gave them whatever,  
15 you know, what information I could get as I was getting it.

16 Q. Now you said there was two witnesses there, Omarr Hill and  
17 Sean Jackson?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And they were standing at the platform?

20 A. Yeah, they were on the platform. I believe they were extra  
21 operators. We had been -- had single track operation going on the  
22 line and we had some extra personnel around for -- to fill trips  
23 for cars that were delayed and any other issues that came up.

24 Q. So were they about to get on the train or were they just on  
25 standby?



1 A. They were just on standby as far as I know.

2 Q. So what did he describe to you?

3 A. I -- what I had them do at that point, because there was just  
4 so much other stuff going on, I had -- I gave them a piece of  
5 paper and had them write down a brief statement which I had  
6 included in my accident paperwork that I forwarded to Linda.  
7 Basically the gist of the statement was, they heard a horn  
8 blowing, 155 came in, hit 148. One of the other -- I don't  
9 remember off the top of my head whether it was Omarr or Sean, but  
10 one of those two operators mentioned in what he wrote that the car  
11 was in spin slide. How he could know that standing on the  
12 platform watching it, I don't know.

13 Q. He said it was in what?

14 A. Spin slide. The condition where the train system's picking  
15 up a wheel slip or a slide.

16 Q. Did he hear it screech or something like sliding wheels did  
17 he state?

18 A. He didn't say anything about that. It's just I don't know  
19 how he could know that just by standing there watching it come in.

20 Q. Now you said they heard the horn or the whistle.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Was that like further back as they were approaching?

23 A. As he was coming in. They didn't really give me any  
24 information as to how far out. In fact, I don't which one -- one  
25 of them told me they didn't -- he heard the horn before he saw the

1 car coming in, and I don't know whether he just was facing the  
2 other direction or what his viewpoint was on that.

3 Q. Is that standard procedure to sound the horn or --

4 A. Not normally, unless there's something in the track area.

5 Q. Yeah. There's no crossing or anything like that?

6 A. No.

7 Q. So there wouldn't be any reason for them to provide warning  
8 unless it's an unusual condition?

9 A. That would be correct, yes.

10 MR. TORRES: Steve.

11 DR. JENNER: Okay. Steve Jenner with the NTSB.

12 BY DR. JENNER:

13 Q. You just mentioned the spin slide. If you can talk a little  
14 more about that. What's -- what causes a spin slide and what does  
15 the train do?

16 A. Well, spin slide, it's just what we call it. And that's  
17 actually what the annunciator label says on the car, spin slide.  
18 The computer -- the traction -- the computer that runs the  
19 propulsion system can sense whether you're either spinning a wheel  
20 under acceleration or starting to start a wheel under braking.  
21 Under power, it will reduce power to the wheels, keep the wheels  
22 from spinning. Under braking, it will reduce the brakes to try to  
23 keep the wheel from locking up.

24 Q. I think you mentioned you were unclear how he came to that  
25 conclusion. Is there any different sounds that's associated with

1 it?

2 A. Not from the outside of the train. There is a beeper that  
3 goes off from the operator's console when that spin slide event  
4 happens, but it's not something you would hear from the outside of  
5 the train.

6 Q. Did you talk to the operator of the striking train that  
7 evening?

8 A. No, I did not get a chance to talk to him at all.

9 Q. Did you see him at all?

10 A. Only while the medics were working on him through the cab  
11 widow and when they took him to the ambulance.

12 Q. Okay. What -- can you tell us what you observed?

13 A. Really couldn't see much with -- when they were working on  
14 him in the car. There were two medics there, you know, doing what  
15 they do. When they took him off the train, he was in -- they had  
16 him in a wheel -- in a stair chair. He looked kind of dazed. I'm  
17 sure he probably had his bell rung pretty good, but other than  
18 that, I did not get a chance to talk to him at all.

19 Q. Did you have a chance to interact with the passengers?

20 A. Not very much. I mean it was obvious that pretty much  
21 everybody got banged around in some manner. I'm trying to think  
22 if there was any specifics. Everybody -- just the usual, you  
23 know, this hurts, that hurts, a little crying and carrying on and  
24 the medics and the fire personnel were pretty much taking care of  
25 everybody around. So I was just trying to put as much together as

1 I could about -- at that point about what happened and scribbling  
2 down a few notes for my accident report.

3 Q. From the time that you got notified to the time you arrived  
4 on scene, what -- how much time had passed?

5 A. Probably less than 5 minutes.

6 Q. And by the time you arrived on scene, there was already  
7 police activity?

8 A. Yeah, when I got there, the SEPTA police were the first ones  
9 on the scene, and then everybody else arrived shortly thereafter.

10 Q. Okay. Do you have any idea how the police were notified and  
11 other emergency responders?

12 A. Mostly likely through control center. I don't have firsthand  
13 knowledge about that.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. That's the normal procedure.

16 Q. Right. So during this time, can you just describe some of  
17 your activities and who else you talked to? What's your role here  
18 and what information is being shared?

19 A. Normally on an accident scene, you know, it's to try to get  
20 some information from the operator as to what happened.  
21 Passengers if possible, if they have anything to say, any other  
22 witnesses that might be around would be the normal procedure. I  
23 spoke briefly to the two operators. I had them write, you know, a  
24 brief statement on what they saw because I really didn't have  
25 time, to spend a whole lot of time talking to them right at that

1 moment. And then beyond that, the rest of it was basically just  
2 answering questions for police and fire, whatever information they  
3 needed.

4 Q. Can you give us an example of what information they  
5 requested?

6 A. You know what? Right now it was just -- it's just -- it was  
7 all kinds of stuff. I can't think of anything specific.

8 Q. Okay. How would you describe the mood of the passengers?  
9 Was it chaotic? Was there screaming? Was it calm?

10 A. It was a little chaotic. Some of the ones that were hurt,  
11 you know, they were obviously, you know, crying. They were in  
12 pain. I believe one woman had teeth knocked out. There was one  
13 passenger lying on the floor in the doorway. I don't know whether  
14 he was unconscious or not, but they were having him not move. It  
15 took them a few minutes to get him picked up and on his way.  
16 There were a few passengers that were on their phones talking to  
17 people, you know, telling them what happened. I guess they were  
18 calling home or whatever. It was a pretty chaotic scene for the  
19 most part.

20 Q. How did things from the emergency responders stand? How  
21 would you describe their actions in terms of -- did it seem like  
22 normal operations for them? Were they complaining they can't get  
23 to passengers? They can't access something?

24 A. No, they had things pretty well together. It was -- seemed  
25 to be really well organized, and they had, you know, after a few

1 minutes, they had a lot of people there. So it's not like they  
2 were -- they had plenty of help, I guess is the way to describe  
3 that. It seemed pretty well organized on their part. It was just  
4 a matter of, you know, the time that it took to get everybody  
5 identified and they were taking them out front to the command  
6 center, triage area, out in front of the terminal --

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. -- to get them transported and whatever treatment they were  
9 going to do on the scene.

10 Q. Do you have any idea when the last passenger was taken away?

11 A. I don't have a specific time, no.

12 Q. Approximate is okay.

13 A. From the scene, I'm going to guess it was probably within 45  
14 minutes or so. I don't know how long people were out front, you  
15 know, before they actually got in an ambulance, but they got  
16 everybody rounded up off the platform area pretty quick.

17 Q. Changing subjects a little. Can you just tell me your  
18 duties, your overall duties as a transportation manager?

19 A. Well, obviously, you know, responding to accidents and  
20 incidents like this, documenting what goes on, obtain whatever  
21 information can be had about an accident. Other duties, just  
22 monitoring the lines for any issues that may occur, bus and rail,  
23 schedule performance. We do rules compliance checks, generally  
24 keeping an eye on things for the most part. We handle customer  
25 complaints when they come in as well, too.

1 Q. Did you know the operator of the striking train?

2 A. Not personally, you know, not outside of work. I had talked  
3 to him at some point within the last year, just a matter of  
4 general conversation. Actually I found out that I knew his  
5 father. His father worked for SEPTA when I was an operator. As a  
6 matter of fact, we worked together on the Norristown High Speed  
7 Line. Other than just a little bit about his father, I really  
8 didn't have anything specific on him, just general chitchat one or  
9 two times.

10 Q. Would it be possible, you mentioned some written statements  
11 that either you wrote or collected from others, to get a copy of  
12 those?

13 A. I'll defer that to Linda. She has everything.

14 MS. ANGOTTA: The originals went over yesterday but, the  
15 group, I have copies of them.

16 DR. JENNER: Okay. So thanks for -- that's all the questions  
17 I have right now. We'll just go around.

18 MR. TORRES: John Reynolds.

19 BY MR. REYNOLDS:

20 Q. Obviously you've been at the Victory for a while. Are you  
21 qualified on the car?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Would you say you're -- evaluate your knowledge of it?

24 A. I'd say I know quite a bit.

25 Q. Okay. Then let's go into a little bit of the spin slide.

1 I'm in a slide, and the car kind of like taps its brakes I guess.  
2 What should exactly an operator do and kind of go into some detail  
3 about it?

4 A. Well, the spin slide system was explained to me back when the  
5 cars first arrived on the property, I've got a little bit of a  
6 hobby interest in things, rails, so any opportunity I got to pick  
7 the brains, I took advantage of. And the way it was explained to  
8 me, as far as the braking side of it works, is when the computer  
9 picks up a wheel beginning to slide, it releases the brakes and  
10 then reapplies them at a percentage of the brake rate that was  
11 requested, I think it was 70 percent but I'm not absolutely  
12 certain if that's the number, but it reapplies a percentage. And  
13 then if a certain amount of time expires without any more wheel  
14 slips, the brakes go back to 100 percent of the rate that was  
15 requested. If another wheel slip is picked up before the timeout,  
16 before it ramps back up, it takes 70 percent of the current rate,  
17 and it'll continue to do that, 70 percent of 70 percent. So it  
18 gets progressively less.

19 Q. What happens if you increase brake siding or your brake  
20 power?

21 A. If the spin slide condition -- the spin slide system takes  
22 over at that point. If you're already in that slide condition, I  
23 don't know that going to a higher brake rate on the handle will  
24 make any difference at that point.

25 Q. Does anything else happen during a spin slide?



1 A. Sand --

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. -- sand is supposed to drop automatically.

4 Q. Is there a way to manually drop sand?

5 A. There's a sander switch but there's been some software  
6 changes over the years on that. I believe the current  
7 configuration is the car won't drop sand unless it's at least in  
8 motion.

9 Q. On the -- what's in motion?

10 A. The vehicle itself, the car is moving. It won't drop sand  
11 when you're sitting still.

12 Q. Okay. But you can drop --

13 A. Yeah, while in motion. And the spin slide system will also  
14 activate the sander automatically as well, in either condition,  
15 spin or slide.

16 Q. Can you tell me about emergency braking?

17 A. Two ways to put the car in emergency braking, there's an  
18 emergency position on the controller handle, all the way  
19 counterclockwise past the brake 7 position which is the highest  
20 service brake rate or the plunger on the dash, the emergency stop  
21 button.

22 Q. Do you know if sand was dropped?

23 A. I did not personally get a chance to look in the track area  
24 to see.

25 Q. When you reported on duty, did you get any information

1 concerning anything from control other than the 113?

2 A. No.

3 Q. With the single track operation, what are your  
4 responsibilities regarding that?

5 A. There was another TM assigned to that. So the only  
6 instructions I had had going into my shift was to take the signs  
7 down after the last revenue car at 2 a.m. Unless I got a call  
8 from control center or the supervisor on the single track  
9 operation, I had nothing required.

10 MS. ANGOTTA: Linda Angotta.

11 BY MS. ANGOTTA:

12 Q. What time did you get the call? You said at 11:50 you got  
13 the call for the 113. Do you remember the time you got the call?

14 A. For the accident?

15 Q. Yes.

16 A. Sometime between 12:10 and 15 I think. The operator that I  
17 had to pick up for the RDT was on the -- I think it was the 1210L.

18 Q. Did the control center designate you the IC?

19 A. Yes.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Clarification, what's the IC?

21 MS. ANGOTTA: Incident commander.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

23 MS. ANGOTTA: Sorry.

24 BY MS. ANGOTTA:

25 Q. So was any other TMs assigned to assist you?

1 A. 314, Matt Conway came and started down from Frontier to help.  
2 I found out later on, during the course of events, that there were  
3 two city units, Car 88 and John Malone, I don't know what his car  
4 number was. I had 88 -- when I found out that he was on scene, I  
5 had him take care of trying to round up all the names of the  
6 injured passengers from the triage area and the command center.

7 Q. They got there pretty quickly?

8 A. Yeah, the fellow working Car 88, I saw him on the platform, I  
9 don't know, probably 15 or 20 minutes maybe after I got there. I  
10 didn't realize who he was at first.

11 Q. So when you first got there, you said that the medics and the  
12 emergency personnel were tending to the injured. At what point  
13 did you realize that a signal violation had occurred?

14 A. Pretty much after I figured out exactly what had happened and  
15 how the two cars came to be where they were. If the car was in  
16 the A berth, they couldn't have displayed a signal at 6S to come  
17 in on 1 track.

18 Q. Okay. After you spoke to the two operators on the platform?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. You figured that out. Could the operator who thought there  
23 might have been spin slide, could he have maybe noticed the axle  
24 of the train? Would they have froze up do you know?

25 A. I don't know whether he would be able to see that or not.

1 Q. Have you ever seen that happen where the axles freeze up and  
2 they don't move at all sort of like a flat wheel situation taking  
3 place?

4 A. I know that it has happened. I can't think that I have ever  
5 actually seen it on a train going by.

6 Q. Okay. I think that's all.

7 MR. CASSITY: Jared Cassity with SMART Transportation.

8 BY MR. CASSITY:

9 Q. It was asked a minute ago if you were qualified on that car.  
10 Do you care to tell me what that actual qualification entails?

11 A. The periodic qualification?

12 Q. Yeah. That's what I'm getting at, and I'm trying to keep it  
13 from coming out rude. I'm curious as to how you can be qualified  
14 on a car but not 100 percent aware of how the brakes actually  
15 operate as far as the sanders go when the wheels are slipping.

16 A. The actual technical aspects of it is not something that's  
17 not normally taught to the operators. They're just basically told  
18 the spin slide system keeps the wheel from locking and, you know,  
19 the sanders work at this point and that point.

20 Q. Okay. So then the extent of the instruction, then what  
21 you're saying is they're made aware that slipping could occur and  
22 in the event it does, the car will basically enact a system that  
23 will help reduce the slipping?

24 A. I'd say that's correct, yes.

25 Q. Is an operator notified or aware or able to know when

1 slipping is going to occur prior to it actually happening?

2 A. It would be based on experience. There's no actual sign  
3 anywhere or -- in extreme cases, there might be an announcement  
4 made by the control center. I know frequently when we have the  
5 weed spraying done, that makes the rail slippery and they will  
6 sometimes announce to operators to be alert for slippery fail  
7 because of the weed spraying.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. But this particular incident, it had rained just prior and  
10 just from my experience over the years, just after a rain, the  
11 rail tends to get slippery.

12 Q. Okay. That was actually my next question about the weather.  
13 You were talking about the two operators on the platform, and I  
14 apologize. I'm not a commuter background fellow. When you say on  
15 the platform, are they physically standing on the platform or are  
16 they located in a different room or --

17 A. These two fellows at the time were actually out on the  
18 platform.

19 Q. Okay. And then was there any other officers or managers that  
20 showed up to the incident after you got there or before you?

21 A. The City Transportation Manager, Car 88, he was there. Other  
22 people showed up later.

23 Q. Okay. Do you know if they submitted reports as well or --

24 A. They should have. But the next people on scene was the  
25 systems safety people.

1 Q. Okay. That's it for me. Thank you.

2 MR. YOUNG: James Young.

3 BY MR. YOUNG:

4 Q. Outside of this incident, are you typically informed when  
5 operators are experiencing slippery rail conditions or if they  
6 overrun stations?

7 A. Not as a rule normally. I mean sometimes we hear about  
8 slippery rail or if there's an issue at the control center with,  
9 you know, this guy is running late because of slippery rail.

10 Q. So you might overhear it or hear it circumstantially?

11 A. Yeah. I wouldn't say that it's a standard practice every  
12 time.

13 Q. Okay. Is there anything that you would do as a result of  
14 hearing that?

15 A. It's not really much I can do about slippery rail personally.  
16 So not -- I'd say no.

17 MR. YOUNG: Okay. That's it for me.

18 BY MS. BONINI:

19 Q. Hi, Ted.

20 A. Hi.

21 Q. So again, Beth Bonini from PennDOT. You said that you've had  
22 some general conversations with this operator. In your duties  
23 though, have you interacted with this operator as far as  
24 overseeing their performance as an operator?

25 A. Beyond an observation, that was not a violation, no.

1 Normally a rules compliance test, if the operator's observed to  
2 follow the procedure, we don't talk to them.

3 Q. Could you explain your training in your current position and  
4 what kind of training you do go through?

5 A. As transportation manager?

6 Q. Yes, sir.

7 A. Well, along with being qualified on all the equipment that  
8 we're responsible, for lines that we're responsible for, over the  
9 years I've had report writing classes, some basic accident  
10 investigation, some computer classes, Word and Excel. The annual  
11 recert covers any rule changes that happen. We get a class for  
12 the drug and alcohol procedures, how to handle a (indiscernible)  
13 employee for that. There's a lot of stuff.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Those are the main ones I can think of right off the top of  
16 my head.

17 Q. What about your hours of service? When did you work previous  
18 to coming on duty?

19 A. 10P to 6 a.m. the night before.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. That's my normal. 10P to 6 a.m. Sunday through Thursday --

22 Q. Sunday through Thursday.

23 A. -- is my normal shift.

24 Q. And does anyone regularly supervise your performance or  
25 evaluate your performance as a transportation manager?

1 A. Currently that would be Linda.

2 Q. And how often do they do that? How often do you see Linda?

3 A. We get an annual review for salary purposes. Just  
4 periodically as, you know, something comes up that we're not doing  
5 right, we hear about that pretty quick.

6 Q. Okay. Thank you.

7 MR. GOOD: George Good, FTA.

8 BY MR. GOOD:

9 Q. I just have a couple of questions related to the two  
10 witnesses you spoke to. Did they give you any -- did they  
11 estimate or have any perception of what the speed was of the  
12 train? Did they say anything to you?

13 A. One of them said 20 to 25 miles an hour.

14 Q. And how about the horn? How far away was the train when they  
15 heard the horn?

16 A. They really didn't give me any details as to that, but what  
17 he said was it sounded -- it seemed like there was something, you  
18 know, he was in trouble, and that -- upon hearing that description  
19 of what happened, that was my first impression as well. If he's  
20 coming in blowing the horn, he's got a problem of some kind.

21 Q. Okay. Thank you. That's all I have.

22 MR. TORRES: Tomas Torres with the NTSB.

23 BY MR. TORRES:

24 Q. Is this car equipped with an event recorder?

25 A. Yes.



1 Q. Would it record the slip slide? Is there a channel for it?

2 A. I believe there is but I don't -- but that's not my area of  
3 responsibility normally.

4 Q. Does it record the horn, too?

5 A. I don't know.

6 Q. Do you do any event recorder evaluations on the engineers or  
7 operators, see how they do?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Any random?

10 A. No, I don't do any of that.

11 Q. So the only time you look at an event recorder is when there  
12 is an incident or --

13 A. Personally the only time I've seen the event recorder things  
14 is in connection with an incident, but it's not part of something  
15 that's required for me.

16 Q. Okay. You say you mention you test employees for rules  
17 compliance. Can you describe what type of test?

18 A. Usually it's a visual observation or in the case of a rule,  
19 for speed limit, we use a radar gun. The majority of it is just  
20 visual operations, from wayside and onboard rides.

21 Q. Okay. So you don't test them to see how they stop at a red  
22 signal or -- and how they go beyond a red signal?

23 A. We would observe that if there is a red -- if we're doing a  
24 signal test. You would be in a position where you could see that  
25 they come to a stop and then proceed. If we're not on the

1 vehicle, once they get out of sight, you really can't see what  
2 they've done at that point.

3 Q. So when a train dispatcher authorizes a train or a car beyond  
4 a red signal, how do they comply? How does the operator comply  
5 once he gets past that red signal?

6 A. I'm not sure what you're --

7 Q. Well, if he has a stop signal, it would be red, correct?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Talks to the dispatcher and the dispatcher authorizes beyond  
10 that signal. How do they go by that? I mean how does he operate?

11 A. It would be restricted speed looking out for switch in the  
12 wrong position or any condition that would cause the signal to be  
13 red, switch in the wrong position, broken rail, that sort of  
14 thing.

15 Q. Is there a speed requirement?

16 A. It would be restricted speed, able to stop in half the range  
17 of vision.

18 Q. So there's no mph or miles per hour?

19 A. Not specifically as I recall from the last revision of the  
20 rules.

21 Q. Okay. So you're a qualified operator, correct?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Are you familiar with that territory?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Can you describe, you know, the territory, the layout of the

1 land as you're approaching the signal and into the station?

2 A. At 69th Street we're talking?

3 Q. Yes, where the accident occurred.

4 A. Okay. Well, coming into the 69th Street area, it's downhill  
5 from Parkview. At the bottom of the hill is the back of the bus  
6 yard. That's signal 2S and it starts to flatten out there.  
7 There's a slight curve to the left. Beyond 2S is the employee's  
8 platform, and there's a slight curve to the right. The next  
9 signal is 4S. You have the tracks coming out of the yard. Just  
10 beyond that, the Victory Avenue overpass. There's a crossover  
11 under Victory Avenue overpass, the El Track Bridge and then 6S.  
12 Beyond 6S, the tracks curve to the left into the terminal tracks,  
13 and there's the -- you have a diverging move at 6S for 2 track or  
14 3 track. There's crossovers to get from 1, from the inbound rail  
15 to 3.

16 Q. So as you're approaching to that signal, coming into the  
17 station, what is it like? Is it tangent track?

18 A. Yeah, tangent for probably 6 or 8 car lengths roughly.  
19 You're coming at it from the curve. You really can't see the 6S  
20 signal until you get almost to the Victory Avenue overpass because  
21 of the curve.

22 Q. And what's the speed of that track coming up to the --

23 A. That's 15 miles an hour maximum there.

24 Q. So you should already be 15 as you're approaching the signal?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Where does that 15 start?

2 A. As soon as you pass the signal at 2S, at the beginning of the  
3 yard area, the bottom of the hill.

4 Q. Right. And how many signals you say between 2 and 6?

5 A. There's one other, 2S, 4S, 6S, three signals total to 6S.

6 Q. What's the distance between that?

7 A. I couldn't give you an exact number of feet.

8 Q. I mean a mile or --

9 A. It's less than a mile. It's tenths.

10 Q. So the signals are --

11 A. Right there, the signals are fairly close together.

12 Q. Close to each other.

13 A. 69th Street is kind of a complicated interlocking. It's  
14 almost like three interlockings stacked together in one.

15 Q. Okay. So with the last signal as 6, if it's red, what are  
16 the other signals going to be -- indicate? What are they going to  
17 convey?

18 A. You're going to have -- in normal operation, the cab signal  
19 operation, you could have proceed cab at 6S or 2S, I'm sorry, and  
20 4S and have the stop at 6S.

21 Q. So both 2S and 4S could be green, which is a proceed.

22 A. That indication is a steady lunar proceed cab.

23 Q. Which one?

24 A. On all the -- all the signals on the line in cab signal  
25 operation, your aspects are lunar or red or a flashing lunar.

1 Flashing lunar is a divert signal. It means you're going to  
2 change tracks. A steady lunar is a straight through move.

3 Q. And lunar is -- what's -- it's white.

4 A. It's white.

5 Q. It's a white lens?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And that indicates what?

8 A. The name would be -- the steady lunar would be proceed cab.

9 The flashing lunar would be proceed cab divert, and the indication  
10 is proceed according to your cab signals.

11 Q. So steady lunar is proceed. And then --

12 A. Flashing lunar is proceed divert. So you're going to proceed  
13 according to your cab signals on a diverging movement.

14 Q. So if he was going to be lined up to 3 track, what would  
15 those at 2S and 4S look like?

16 A. They would still be a steady lunar because that's a straight  
17 move there.

18 Q. So 6S would be?

19 A. To go to 3 track, it would be a flashing lunar with -- that  
20 signal has two additional lights that indicate -- one is a number  
21 2 that lights up. The other is a number 3 that lights up and  
22 indicates 2 track or 3 track. So for 3 track at 6S, you would  
23 have a flashing lunar with the number 3 illuminated.

24 Q. Okay. So that I can understand, so on the signal system,  
25 you're going to have lunar, right, a solid lunar and then if

1 you're going to divert, you're going to have a lunar --

2 A. Flashing.

3 Q. -- flasher. What's flashing?

4 A. The lunar.

5 Q. The lunar itself is flashing.

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. And then you have red. So what is the three

8 indications you get in the system?

9 A. There are clear block indications in the system as well. A  
10 green signal on the wayside -- a green aspect on the wayside would  
11 be a clear block signal which indicates clear to the next signal.  
12 This line has signals only at the interlockings. Flashing green  
13 would be a clear block divert meaning clear to the next signal  
14 with a diverging movement. There's also a restricting and a  
15 restricting divert. That's the amber light or a flashing amber.  
16 Certain places the restricting or restricting divert is the best  
17 clear block signal that you can get. From 4S in, restricting  
18 divert is the best you can get. Or, I'm sorry, a restricting  
19 signal or diverging.

20 Q. Okay. So you got different type of signals?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Coming into the station, you're always going to have the  
23 lunars?

24 A. In cab signal operation, yes.

25 Q. So those are always going to be lunar?

1 A. Lunar or red, you know, red means stop, but if you've got --  
2 if you've got signal to proceed, you're going to have a lunar or a  
3 flashing lunar.

4 Q. And what's the speed requirement on a lunar or is it --

5 A. The lunar aspect is operated according to what's indicated on  
6 the speedometer display and the cab signal display. That gives  
7 you a speed limit. In the terminal area, the best you can get is  
8 15 miles an hour.

9 Q. And then going into the track, to the station track?

10 A. Yes. Before you get to the platform tracks themselves, you  
11 will be a no code. That's a stop and proceed. It depends on  
12 whether the -- which berth is occupied. If the A berth, the berth  
13 closest to the entrance of the platform is occupied, you cannot  
14 get a signal into any of those tracks, but if there's a car in the  
15 second berth, closest to the bumper, you can. We have a procedure  
16 for 2 car trains that they must call from Township Line for a  
17 track assignment because the signal could route -- the system  
18 could route a two car train into a track with only one berth  
19 available. So the whole train wouldn't be able to get on the  
20 platform. So that procedure exists so that control center knows  
21 there's a two car train coming in and could put them on a track  
22 that has enough room.

23 Q. So on S6 [sic], would that -- would he get a stop and  
24 proceed? What would that look like?

25 A. There's no wayside indication for stop and proceed. What

1 would happen is after you pass 6S with the lunar going in on say 1  
2 track, it's probably about 100 yards or so past the signal. Your  
3 cab signals will go just to zero, all the lights will go out. At  
4 that point, you need -- the train needs to be brought to a stop.  
5 If you don't put the brakes on, after I think 6 seconds, they'll  
6 put the brakes on for you and stop you. Once you come to a stop,  
7 the overspeed light on the speedometer goes out and you hit the  
8 stop or proceed button and at that point, you'll get a flashing 15  
9 on your speed display and that's your indication for stop or  
10 proceed after you've pressed the button.

11 Coming into 69th Street terminal is one of the -- there's a  
12 small list of locations where you're allowed to activate stop and  
13 proceed without calling for permission first. Coming into 69th  
14 Street, coming into Norristown, going into the yard, places where  
15 the -- where you're going into, either a dead-end track or a track  
16 that's not part of the signal system.

17 Q. So this car was equipped with cab signal, correct?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. It was activated?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. And is that channel recorded on the event recorder?

22 A. The cab signal indications, yeah, that is recorded in the  
23 event recorder.

24 Q. And it would show activated if it activated the train brake?

25 A. It'll show the overspeed and it should show -- and then other



1 indications on the -- other information on the event recorder will  
2 show the brakes applied.

3 Q. I understand there was a car on track 1, unoccupied.

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And the purpose of that or the reason for it?

6 A. That was a spare car that they were keeping in the terminal  
7 in case they needed a vehicle to fill a trip for a late train.  
8 They had two operators available on the platform and an extra  
9 vehicle. So if the train was late coming in, they would be able  
10 to load that one up and send the trip out on time.

11 Q. The dispatcher described that the operator, he already knows  
12 what track he's going to go into or what scheduled track he's  
13 going into.

14 A. Yeah, that's in the run guide, your scheduled track. It's --

15 Q. Can you explain that to us?

16 A. The run guide is a schedule that's provided the operators,  
17 and there's a column on the run guide that says what your track  
18 assignment is for each trip arriving at 69th Street. It's 1, 2 or  
19 3, whichever track you're supposed to be on.

20 Q. So it's already predetermined before they go on duty?

21 A. That's part of the schedule. They plan that into the  
22 schedule when they revise the schedules, three times a year  
23 generally.

24 Q. So is it like on a sheet or is it on a computer screen or --

25 A. It's available on a computer screen and they can print that

1 out. I believe it's on the paddles. I don't normally look at the  
2 paddles. I use the run guide personally myself because that has  
3 all the information.

4 Q. Right.

5 A. The paddle would be just an operator's individual assignment,  
6 just the trips that he's supposed to make. It doesn't show --

7 Q. Does it show on his screen or --

8 A. It'll show on his paperwork and it's available for him to  
9 look up. There's nothing on the vehicle, every trip that shows  
10 that.

11 Q. So on his paperwork, when he reports, when he goes on duty,  
12 I'll show what track he's going to go into?

13 A. Yeah, along with his schedule and what trips he's supposed to  
14 make.

15 Q. Okay. Thank you.

16 MR. TORRES: Steve.

17 DR. JENNER: Actually I have no follow ups. I have no  
18 questions.

19 MR. TORRES: All right. John Reynolds.

20 BY MR. REYNOLDS?

21 Q. The dispatcher or the controller has said that she had it in  
22 automatic, and I don't mean to put you on the spot because you may  
23 not know this, is track 1 a normal assignment during nighttime  
24 operations?

25 A. I believe that it is. I'd have to look up -- normally, yes.

1 Q. Do you know what the Vetag setting was on 155 car when it --  
2 that's assuming it stopped it?

3 A. No, I did not take particular -- specific note of that.

4 Q. Okay. When I looked at it, it was 2 but I was there late.

5 A. Okay.

6 Q. So I don't know if anybody tampered with it or not.

7 A. I'm not -- I don't know either honestly.

8 Q. But there was a car in 2 as well. You said coming down the  
9 hill, before you get to the 69th Street Complex, do you know what  
10 the track speed is there?

11 A. With clear track and the proper signal indications, coming  
12 from the south end of West Overbrook interlocking, the first track  
13 section, you'll get 50 and as the signal comes up at 2S, routing  
14 you into the terminal in automatic, it'll pop up to 70. Just past  
15 Parkview Station, it's 55, and then just above State Road Bridge  
16 it drops to 30, if everything is clear ahead of you. And then at  
17 the 2S signal, the end of the yard, it'll drop to 15 when you pass  
18 that.

19 MR. REYNOLDS: Okay. That's all I have.

20 MS. ANGOTTA: Linda Angotta.

21 BY MS. ANGOTTA:

22 Q. Did anyone ask you to take power out?

23 A. After -- yeah, before -- when the system safety people got  
24 here, they wanted to go in the track area and that's when we took  
25 power out.

1 Q. So while the fire department and medics were there, power was  
2 still --

3 A. Yeah, there was -- there was no need for them to go in the  
4 track area, and if they had a need to go in the track area, they  
5 would have asked for power out at which time we would have taken  
6 care of that and got that done. We mainly kept power on so we  
7 would have lights on the cars.

8 MS. ANGOTTA: Okay. That's all I have.

9 MR. CASSITY: Jerry Cassity with SMART.

10 BY MR. CASSITY:

11 Q. Apparently I'm not so smart. I've got to find my starting  
12 point. On the wheel slip, is that a fairly common occurrence on  
13 the rail for SEPTA?

14 A. Yeah, under certain conditions, yes.

15 Q. Okay. Is there -- beyond textbook, is there any specific  
16 training that the operators are given for wheel slip? Are they  
17 ever actually put on the cars and allowed to have the wheel slip  
18 and then to see how the car will handle or react?

19 A. Part of the training for operators is they will get out  
20 actually on the line and operate with the instructors before  
21 they're qualified and then we do some time with a mentor operator  
22 after they're first released. So during that period of time,  
23 they're likely to see it. There's no actual training that --  
24 where we go make the rail slippery on purpose so they can --

25 Q. There's no requirement that actually says they have to

1 experience it with a manager or trainer on board?

2 A. No.

3 Q. Okay. Then you're talking about the berths, and you had that  
4 one car in there for storage. Is stacking the berths, if you  
5 will, I don't know if that's the lingo, but is stacking the  
6 berths, is that a common thing for movement?

7 A. I'm not sure what you're asking.

8 Q. Well, you had the car on A berth or B berth, I think it was B  
9 berth, is it common to bring another car or train on top of that  
10 into A berth on top of it? In other words, is it common to have  
11 one car here and bring another one on top?

12 A. Only if the car that's already there is in the B berth at the  
13 bumper.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. A berth you would not be able to get on the platform.

16 Q. Okay. Is there any verbal communication to do that or is  
17 that part of the run guide or --

18 A. Normal operations, there are times when there's a car  
19 scheduled to be in the B berth and another car scheduled to come  
20 in the A berth. That does happen regularly.

21 Q. Um-hum.

22 A. The two car trains are required to call for their track  
23 assignments to make sure that they get routed onto a track that  
24 has both berths available.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. For movement off of the tracks, there's communicated  
2 required. If a car is in the B berth, they're required to contact  
3 control or the starter will contract control on the operator's  
4 behalf before that move is made from B to A, just to make sure we  
5 don't have something coming in at the same time.

6 Q. Okay. And then the run guide is -- how often is it issued?

7 A. At least three times a year, sometimes it can be an extra  
8 signup for work. Sometimes we do an A and a B.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. But generally three times a year.

11 Q. I'm assuming it can be amended. How is that done? Is the  
12 whole run guide issued or is --

13 A. You mean if there's an error or something?

14 Q. If there's a change to the plan.

15 A. Well, if there's corrections to be made to the current  
16 schedule, that's -- it can usually be done right away, but  
17 normally they only get issued when there's a schedule change, and  
18 that's three times a year.

19 Q. There was nothing new issued?

20 A. No.

21 Q. Okay. And then you said it gives them a plan. So when a car  
22 is coming into a terminal, there's no need for them to contact a  
23 controller. They basically just go off the run guide, the signal  
24 gives them permission in and then they know from the run guide  
25 where it is they're going. There's no communication to --

1 A. The operator is required to set a switch on his dash to  
2 select the proper track normally. So that -- the operator is  
3 required you to do that. He needs to select 1, 2 or 3 based on  
4 what his schedule tells him he's supposed to go on.

5 Q. That's it for me. Thank you.

6 MR. YOUNG: James Young.

7 BY MR. YOUNG:

8 Q. I think you said that there's some locations where you are  
9 allowed to press the stop and proceed button and then continue and  
10 69th Street is one of them.

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Were you referring to signal 6S?

13 A. The stop and proceed coming into 69th Street would usually --  
14 normally occur somewhere after you pass 6S.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Where exactly that happens depends on whether the track  
17 you're going into is completely clear or if there is a car in the  
18 B berth. If there's a car in the B berth, it happens a little bit  
19 further out than it happens after you pass 6S.

20 Q. Okay. So after you get the lunar at 6S, proceed and as you  
21 get closer to the berth car, then you -- well, are you saying  
22 there's a point then when you would need to use the stop and  
23 proceed?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Yeah, going into any of the terminal tracks, you will get the  
2 stop and proceed at some point. If there's -- if the track is  
3 completely clear, you'll be closer to the terminal itself before  
4 that happens, but if there's a car occupying the B berth, it'll  
5 happen further away from the terminal.

6 Q. But you're not authorized to use the button at 6S unless the  
7 controller instructs you to?

8 A. Yeah, not before passing 6S point.

9 Q. Okay.

10 BY MS. BONINI:

11 Q. Do you get notified if there's a signal violation?

12 A. If we're the supervisor they're assigning to that incident,  
13 yes.

14 Q. Do you know, what's the time differential between when the  
15 signal violation occurred and when you get notified?

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mr. Lewis is here for your 10 a.m.  
17 He'll be over in the kitchen area.

18 MR. MILLS: I don't know that there's a specific time limit.  
19 It's just the amount of time that it takes control center to  
20 determine what has possibly happened and then they get on the  
21 radio and call us to go to the location. I couldn't say that it's  
22 like 5 minute or 10 minutes. It varies.

23 BY MS. BONINI:

24 Q. And what do you do once you find out there's a signal  
25 violation?



1 A. Once we're informed of a signal violation, we'll start to the  
2 location. At some point, they'll also have a signal maintainer go  
3 to the interlocking location to check the event recorder at each  
4 of the signal locations to determine that a violation actually did  
5 occur. When we arrive at the location, we meet with the operator,  
6 advise him that, you know, there's been a possible signal  
7 violation. Once we get confirmation from control center that they  
8 have got confirmation from the signal maintainer that the  
9 violation actually occurred, at that point, the operator will be  
10 withheld from service and taken down for the drug test.

11 Q. What happens to the vehicle?

12 A. What would normally happen in a lot of -- it varies depending  
13 on the manpower and who's where. One possible scenario is I go  
14 out, I get informed that the violation actually occurred. I  
15 advise the operator he's withheld, and at that point, I would  
16 operate the vehicle to 69th Street where the vehicle would be  
17 taken out of service and they check the event recorder on the car.  
18 They do an inspection on the car. There's various items that they  
19 check, and the operator would be transported to medical for his  
20 body fluids test.

21 Q. Does that vehicle ever go back into revenue service before  
22 the check?

23 A. It's not supposed to.

24 Q. Okay. Do you investigate all signal violations? Or not you,  
25 but someone investigates --

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. -- all signal violations?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. You just don't know the time differential between when the  
5 signal violation has occurred and when someone is called to do the  
6 investigation?

7 A. I don't have any specific information on that.

8 Q. Thank you.

9 MR. GOOD: George Good, FTA, just one quick question.

10 BY MR. GOOD:

11 Q. So I know there were some single track operations going on.  
12 So the regular schedule flow may have been off, but normally, in a  
13 normal operation, that 6S, would an operator coming into the  
14 terminal, would they normally expect -- is the schedule set where  
15 they normally have their routes and then their signal there?

16 A. The operator has to set the Vetag selector on the vehicle for  
17 the track that he's scheduled to go in on. As you approach 6S,  
18 there's a pick up for that. So the wayside equipment reads the  
19 request from the car for whatever track it's asking for and sets  
20 the switches accordingly and then the signal comes up.

21 Q. But the schedule for the departing train where he may select  
22 a signal that would block him, is the schedule set where this guy  
23 would get in before that guy would be selected his route --

24 A. In most cases, yes. There are some times where there's a  
25 little bit of a conflict there but it's generally not very long.

1 Q. Okay. Thanks.

2 MR. TORRES: Tomas Torres with the NTSB.

3 BY MR. TORRES:

4 Q. You say that once he gets past -- if he had a red signal at  
5 6S, he could get a stop and proceed, right? Can you explain that?

6 A. If the operator has a red signal at 6S, he needs to the call  
7 control center.

8 Q. Okay. So when does he get the stop and proceed? Like how  
9 would he get it? Like --

10 A. Well, it depends on the situation. If control center was  
11 going to give the operator permission to pass the red signal at  
12 6S, after getting those instructions from the control center, the  
13 operator would press the stop or proceed switch so he would be  
14 able to move the vehicle.

15 Q. And why would that apply, stop and proceed? Under what  
16 conditions?

17 A. At that location, if -- normally if there's a signal problem  
18 of some sort, if we're having signal issues, they'll either be a  
19 transportation manager assigned a location or signal maintainer,  
20 sometimes both, depending on the nature of the problem. Maybe the  
21 switch is not operating correctly. So the switch would have to be  
22 set by hand, and if the switch has to be set by hand, that's a  
23 condition that the control center would not be able to give them a  
24 signal to proceed on the wayside.

25 Q. And if there's a car in one of the stations, would that work,

1 too, or would that apply?

2 A. If there was a car in the A berth on the track that they're  
3 trying to go in on, you would not be able to get a signal at 6S.  
4 Are you looking for a scenario?

5 Q. Yeah, would a stop and proceed apply there?

6 A. Only -- the most likely scenario where you would get -- would  
7 be given permission to go by 6S indicating red would be if there  
8 was a broke down car in the terminal, and you were bringing  
9 another vehicle in to couple to it to move it. That's --

10 Q. Okay. Can you define stop and proceed?

11 A. As it --

12 Q. Yeah, what's required from the operator when he gets that  
13 stop and proceed? How does he go? After he stops, how does he go  
14 forward?

15 A. After he stops and he gets permission to activate the stop  
16 and proceed, he would push the button on his dash that says stop  
17 and proceed. When he pushes that button, he would get the  
18 flashing 15 mile per hour aspect on the speed display, his cab  
19 signal, and then he would be able to proceed at up to 15 miles per  
20 hour.

21 Q. And what is he required to do? I mean like is there any  
22 conditions or --

23 A. It depends on the situation, the scenario.

24 Q. Is he looking out for anything or --

25 A. Well, he would be looking out for switches lined against him

1 for one. That would be one of the scenarios. If it's a situation  
2 -- another situation where the signal wouldn't be able to be  
3 displayed, would be a broken rail, another train in the -- in that  
4 section. He's looking out for anything unusual or obstructions on  
5 the track.

6 Q. So it would be for unusual conditions?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. You said earlier it's a grade -- is a grade? Is it  
9 downhill going into the station there?

10 A. In the area of 6S?

11 Q. Yes, like going into the platform.

12 A. It's more or less flat there.

13 Q. It's flat?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. So if it's flat, how would you get slip slide?

16 A. If the rail were slippery, and you were braking or  
17 accelerating, you would -- you could spin or slide on flat  
18 territory.

19 Q. In your approach to 6S signal, is it flat or is that a grade?

20 A. That's more or less flat. It may be slightly upgrade, but  
21 the cars don't roll very much there. So I'm going to call it  
22 flat.

23 Q. Do you get reports of slips in that area?

24 A. Generally, no.

25 Q. Okay. One more question. How often do you ride with the

1 operators? I mean what's the requirement?

2 A. About once a month.

3 Q. And do you give them any feedback?

4 A. Well, we'll observe them for rules, if there's any procedure  
5 violations or rule violations, obviously look at feedback.  
6 Personally I may give the operators some points on smooth  
7 operation because that's something that's just a personal pet  
8 peeve of mine. You know, some operators are a little rough, you  
9 know, hard stops, things like that, and I just -- I try to help  
10 them be a little smoother when I can.

11 Q. Yeah. But you have a list of items that you look for?

12 A. It's pretty much any rule in the book, other than a rule of  
13 the month that we're assigned. There's a certain amount of checks  
14 we're supposed to do in specific areas, signal rules, speeds, that  
15 sort of thing but any rules in those categories. We can pretty  
16 much pick the ones we want to look at.

17 MR. TORRES: Steve?

18 DR. JENNER: I have no questions.

19 BY MR. REYNOLDS:

20 Q. Ted, we do live in the northeast. So we do have slippery  
21 rail conditions. What do we do to prevent that?

22 A. The main time, I think what you're looking for is the fall  
23 season. During the fall season the leaves falling off the trees  
24 get run over by the trains and puts an oily film on the track. We  
25 use rail scrubber equipment to alleviate that. The rail scrubber

1 is kind of a combination of keeping the rail -- try to get some of  
2 the leaf goo off of the rail and also to keep excessive sand from  
3 building up and causing issues with the signal system.

4 MR. REYNOLDS: Nothing further.

5 MS. ANGOTTA: Linda Angotta.

6 BY MS. ANGOTTA:

7 Q. Did you have your radio on scan that evening or --

8 A. No.

9 Q. You were just on the suburban supervisor channel?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Did Omarr or Sean Jackson say anything to you that they drove  
12 that evening and experienced slippery rail?

13 A. No, they did not.

14 MS. ANGOTTA: That's all.

15 MR. CASSITY: Jerry Cassity with SMART.

16 BY MR. CASSITY:

17 Q. Just real quick, it was said that the controller had the  
18 system on automatic. When the system is on automatic, is there  
19 anything required of him or her to control switches or to mainly  
20 do anything to determine the rail for the cars that are being  
21 operated?

22 A. In automatic, no. If you're coming into 69th Street, you say  
23 have track 1 selected, and track 1 is occupied, it'll route you to  
24 the next available open track. So if 1's occupied, it'll try to  
25 put you on 2. If 2's occupied, at that point, it'll try to put

1 you on 3. If they're all occupied, you're going to get a stop  
2 there and you're going to have to sit.

3 Q. To me it sounds like there would be a minimal need for radio  
4 chatter. Is there a lot of radio chatter in your opinion or  
5 anything that would keep the controller busy on the radio?

6 A. Speaking only from my knowledge of the control center from  
7 quite a few years ago, they -- the rail controller that handles  
8 Media-Sharon Hill and Norristown also has to handle subway surface  
9 for the city. So they could have something going on, on the city  
10 side and in that hour of the evening, I believe there's only one  
11 controller on duty on the rail side.

12 Q. Okay. So then he or she could be rather busy with radio  
13 calls?

14 A. It's possible, yes.

15 MR. CASSITY: Okay. I have nothing else.

16 MR. GOOD: George Good, just real quick.

17 BY MR. GOOD:

18 Q. The cell phone policy, is that part of your checks?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And what is the policy?

21 A. The phone has to be turned off and stored off the operator's  
22 person.

23 Q. Do you know in this case, was there any bag or anything that  
24 the police or anybody took possession of, of the operator?

25 A. I believe the operator had his bag with him when he was



1 transported to the hospital.

2 Q. Okay. Thank you.

3 MR. GOOD: That's it.

4 MR. TORRES: Tomas Torres with the NTSB.

5 BY MR. TORRES:

6 Q. Do you know when's the last time you rode with this engineer?

7 A. Actually I don't recall having ridden with him at all.

8 Q. Is he one of the employees that you supervise or --

9 A. He would be, yes.

10 Q. Okay. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

11 A. No, nothing I can think of at this time.

12 MR. TORRES: Any more questions?

13 There's no more questions. So this will conclude the  
14 interview. Thank you.

15 MR. MILLS: Thank you.

16 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: SEPTA TRAIN CRASH  
UPPER DARBY, PENNSYLVANIA  
AUGUST 22, 2017  
Interview of Theodore D. Mills

ACCIDENT NUMBER: DCA17FP012

PLACE: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

DATE: August 23, 2017

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

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the signature area. A small horizontal line extends from the right side of the box.

Transcriber