



PRELIMINARY REPORT RAILROAD

Collision of BNSF Eastbound Train S-LACLPC1-26K and BNSF Westbound Train Q-CHISBD6-27L

Panhandle, Texas

June 28, 2016

DCA16FR008

The information in this report is preliminary and will be supplemented or corrected during the course of the investigation.

On Tuesday, June 28, 2016, at 8:21 a.m. central daylight time, two BNSF Railway (BNSF) trains collided at milepost 525.4 on the BNSF's Panhandle Subdivision. (See figure 1.) Each train was crewed by a locomotive engineer and a conductor. Eastbound train S-LACLPC1-26K consisted of 3 head-end locomotives, 2 distributive power units, and 56 loaded cars, and westbound train Q-CHISBD6-27L consisted of 5 head-end locomotives and 54 loaded cars. The signal system was lined to route the westbound train into the Panhandle control point siding at milepost 526.1 while holding the eastbound train on the main track before the east end of the siding. The collision, which caused the derailment of the locomotives and several cars from both trains, occurred about one-half mile east of the east switch (east end) of the Panhandle siding. The weather at the time of the accident was clear and 74°F. The collision and derailment resulted in a significant fire. Three crew members died in the accident—the engineer and conductor on the eastbound train and the conductor on the westbound train. The engineer of the westbound train jumped from the train before impact and survived with injuries. The BNSF estimated damages of \$16 million.

Train movements in the area of the accident are governed by signal indications of a traffic control system. A positive train control system is scheduled to be implemented by the BNSF in this area by the end of 2016.

Preliminary review of signal event recorder data and tests of the signal system indicate the last signal the eastbound train passed before the collision was a *stop* (red) signal. The previous signal the eastbound train passed was an *approach* (yellow) signal.¹ A preliminary review of locomotive event recorder data revealed that the eastbound train was traveling about 62 mph when it went by the approach signal at the west end of the Panhandle siding and about 65 mph when it went by the stop signal at the east end of the Panhandle siding.

¹ A red signal aspect requires a train to stop before any part of the train passes the signal; an approach signal indicated by a solid yellow aspect requires that a train reduce speed to a maximum of 40 mph and be prepared to stop at the next signal.



Figure 1. Derailment site.

[508 Text: Aerial view of the accident showing derailed cars and smoke and fire. Firefighting efforts (streams of water) are directed toward the center of the fire. The tracks are oriented diagonally, with west in the upper left and east in the lower right.]

Investigators completed sight distance tests of the signal system for the operation of both trains into the collision point, and the results are being analyzed. Investigators also shipped event and video recorders to the NTSB recorders laboratory in Washington, DC, for further analysis. The investigation is ongoing.

Parties to the investigation include the Federal Railroad Administration, BNSF Railway, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, and the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers.