



# PRELIMINARY REPORT

## RAILROAD

### Employee Fatalities – CSX/Amtrak

Washington, D.C.

June 27, 2017

DCA17MR010

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

On June 27, 2017, about 11:18 p.m., eastern daylight time, two CSX Transportation (CSX) employees were struck and killed by southbound Amtrak train 175 at Amtrak milepost 134.5 at Ivy City in Washington, D.C. The two employees (conductor and conductor trainee) were returning to their locomotive on their southbound train after inspecting a reported defective railcar.<sup>1</sup> They had their backs toward the approaching Amtrak train when they were struck. The sky was clear, visibility was 10 miles, and the temperature was 64°F.

There were four parallel tracks (two CSX and two Amtrak) where the employees were struck. CSX freight train Q13727 was stopped on CSX track 2. The middle track was Amtrak track 3 where Amtrak train 175 was traveling in the same direction as the freight train. The track on the far right was Amtrak track 2 where Amtrak train 66 was traveling in the opposite direction of the freight train at the time the employees were struck. According to each Amtrak engineer, they started sounding their horns when they observed the employees on the track.<sup>2</sup> (See figure.)

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<sup>1</sup> CSX refers to the conductor trainee as “conductor qualifier.”

<sup>2</sup> The front of both Amtrak trains passed about the same time the employees were struck.



**Figure.** CSX train Q13727 that was stopped on CSX track 2.

A CSX train dispatcher told the crew of CSX freight train Q13727 that a wayside defect detector had indicated overheated bearings or wheels on their train. The detector recorded a suspect axle. The crew was given the specific axle to inspect. The CSX engineer explained that the conductor and the conductor trainee had gone back to inspect the car with the suspect axle.

After discussing the situation with the train dispatcher, the train crew decided to set the defective car out of the train using the crossover switches between tracks 1 and 2. The engineer pulled the front of the train partially through the crossovers so that the rear of the train was on track 1 and the front of the train was on track 2. The front of the CSX train was then adjacent to Amtrak track 3. The first car in the CSX train had three bays or platforms with containers. The employees were struck near the end of the first car, about 350 feet from the locomotive.

Before setting the car out, the conductor discussed the situation with his supervisor. The supervisor consulted with the CSX mechanical department and, after getting the results of a second defect detector, he told the crew to inspect a different car. Meanwhile, the CSX supervisor drove to the train's location to assist with these issues. He was in his vehicle near the tracks across from the CSX locomotive when the accident occurred.

After inspecting the second car reported by the mechanical department, the conductor and conductor trainee started walking back to the locomotive. The rear of their train was on track 1 and the front of their train was on track 2. As they approached the front of the locomotive, the walking space between CSX track 2 and Amtrak track 3 narrowed. They were struck by Amtrak train 175 that was traveling about 73 mph on Amtrak's track 3.