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Lawyers for Amtrak passengers attack engineer's credibility

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Brandon Bostian, the engineer on the ill-fated Amtraktrain that crashed May 12, gave investigators sharply differing accounts of what he recalls of the moments before the crash, raising questions about his credibility, two prominent plaintiffs said Monday.

Tom Kline and Robert Mongelluzzi said at a press conference that inconsistencies in Bostian's story underscore the need for Bostian to be deposed under oath.

Mongeluzzi's firm represents 17 passengers who have filed claims, while Kline & Specter represents 12 victims, including two death claims. All cases involving Train 188 have been consolidated in U.S. District Court in Philadelphia.

Much remains unknown about the circumstances leading up to the May 12 crash of the northbound Amtrak commuter train on the Frankford Junction curve in the Port Richmond section of the city.

lthough the curve had a post- l speed limit of 50 miles per hour, the train was traveling at more than twice that rate when it entered the curve.

The engineer, Bostian, 32, declined to be interviewed by police after the accident. The NTSB has said there is no evidence that he was on his cell phone or texting at the time of the crash, leading to speculation that he simply lost track of where he was.

Nor was there evidence of a mechanical failure, the NTSB said.

Of the 238 passengers on the train, eight were killed and more than 200 injured.

Because the train not only exceeded the posted speed limit but apparently accelerated into the curve, plaintiffs lawyers have concluded that Amtrak is almost surely legally responsible for the crash. Adding to case against the government, attorneys say, is its failure to install safety equipment on the north bound track that would have automatically caused the train to slow as it approached the curve.

The crash unleased a flurry of competition among personal injury lawyers in the city to land clients with claims against Amtrak.