

# Seattle Post-Intelligencer

## The Latest: Survivors question findings on 2015 Amtrak crash

Updated 11:53 am, Tuesday, May 17, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Latest on the investigation into last year's deadly Amtrak derailment in Philadelphia (all times local):

1:25 p.m.

Lawyers for passengers injured in the deadly Amtrak crash in Philadelphia last year say federal investigators failed to consider alternate reasons why the engineer may have sped up the train.

The National Transportation Safety Board said Tuesday that Brandon Bostian lost track of where he was on a sharp curve because he was likely distracted by a disabled commuter train.

That train had been struck by rocks in the neighborhood that Bostian was approaching.

Lawyer Thomas Kline wonders if he sped up to get through the area quickly and avoid being "rocked."

Kline and co-counsel Robert Mongeluzzi believe Bostian was reckless in driving twice the speed limit with hundreds of lives at stake.

They say vehicle drivers would be considered reckless if their minds drifted and they doubled their speed.

---

12:20 p.m.

Amtrak says it will carefully review federal regulators' findings on the probable cause of a train derailment that killed eight people in Philadelphia last year.

Federal regulators said in Washington Tuesday that the probable cause was an engineer speeding into a turn because he was distracted by news that another train had been hit by a rock. A contributing cause was the lack of a speed control system.

Amtrak says it will review and as appropriate quickly implement the findings of the National Transportation Safety Board. Their recommendations included researching seat belts in rail cars and methods to secure luggage that can become projectiles in a derailment.

Amtrak says its goal is to fully understand what happened and how they can prevent similar incidents in the future.

---

11:55 a.m.

Federal regulators say the probable cause of a fatal Amtrak derailment was an engineer speeding into a turn because he was distracted by news that another train had been hit by a rock. A contributing cause was the lack of a speed control system.

The National Transportation Safety Board voted Tuesday to accept 13 findings they said led to the derailment in Philadelphia last year that killed eight people.

Investigators say engineer Brandon Bostian's attention was diverted by a disabled commuter train nearby that had been hit by a rock.

They believe Bostian might have been disoriented and sped up on a dangerous curve before reaching the straight portion of track on May 12, 2015.

Investigators also said injuries were exacerbated by inadequate requirements for passenger protection.

They say the train's emergency windows dislodged, killing four people who were ejected.

---

10:50 a.m.

A medical officer says a head injury suffered by an Amtrak engineer during a fatal derailment likely kept him from remembering what happened.

National Transportation Safety Board chief medical officer Mary Pat McKay said Tuesday that Brandon Bostian was thrown around the cab of his locomotive when it overturned.

Investigators believe Bostian's attention was diverted by a disabled commuter train nearby that had been hit by a rock. They believe Bostian might have been disoriented and sped up on a dangerous curve before reaching the straight portion of track on May 12, 2015.

Bostian had told investigators that he didn't remember what happened between pushing the throttle to pick up speed and then braking when he felt the train going too fast into the curve.

The crash killed eight people.

---

10:30 a.m.

A member of the National Transportation Safety Board says an Amtrak engineer went "from distraction to disaster .... in a matter of seconds" before the deadly Philadelphia crash that killed eight people.

NTSB member Robert Sumwalt said Tuesday at a hearing that the potential for human error should be backstopped by technological systems such as Positive Train Control, which would have slowed the train even if the engineer tried to speed up on a curve.

Investigators believe engineer Brandon Bostian's attention was diverted by a disabled commuter train nearby that had been hit by a rock. They believe Bostian might have lost track of where he was and sped up on a dangerous curve before reaching the straight portion of track on May 12, 2015.

---

10 a.m.

Investigators say an Amtrak engineer might have lost track of where he was before accelerating into a dangerous curve, leading to a deadly Philadelphia crash that killed eight people.

National Transportation Safety Board investigator Steve Jenner says Brandon Bostian's attention was diverted by an incident involving a commuter train being hit by a rock.

Jenner says Bostian opened the train up to full throttle for 40 seconds before the derailment and the train reached 106 mph. He says that would make sense for someone thinking they had already passed the curve.

Investigators also say that the train's emergency windows dislodged as the train cars slid on their sides, killing four people who were ejected.

NTSB Chairman Christopher Hart says speed controls on the tracks would have provided a technological safety net.

---

9:40 a.m.

The chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board says the engineer of an Amtrak train that crashed, killing eight people, was apparently "greatly influenced" by an earlier incident in which a commuter train was struck by a rock.

NTSB Chairman Christopher Hart says at a Tuesday hearing that the train's emergency windows dislodged as the derailed train cars slid on their sides, allowing some passengers to be ejected.

A U.S. official briefed by investigators told The Associated Press that Amtrak engineer Brandon Bostian was distracted by radio transmissions before the May 2015 crash in Philadelphia. He wasn't authorized to comment publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Hart says speed controls weren't in place and would have provided a "technological safety net for inevitable human error."

---

2 a.m.

Federal safety regulators are scheduled to meet Tuesday to detail the probable cause of last year's deadly Amtrak derailment in Philadelphia.

A U.S. official briefed by investigators says engineer Brandon Bostian was distracted by radio transmissions before the May 2015 crash that killed eight people.

The official was not authorized to comment publicly because of the ongoing probe and spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity.

The cause won't be determined officially until the National Transportation Safety Board votes after its meeting.

Bostian told investigators after the accident that he recalled radio transmissions that night from a local commuter train operator who said a rock had shattered his windshield. Bostian said he was concerned about the welfare of that train's engineer and for his own safety.