



ACCIDENT SUMMARY

Miriam, Nevada

HWY-11-MH-012

(3 Pages)



**NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
OFFICE OF HIGHWAY SAFETY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20594**

Accident Summary

A. ACCIDENT

LOCATION: US Highway 95 (US-95), Veterans Memorial Highway, at Milepost 55.9, and Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) Protected Grade Crossing, DOT Number 740 765S, Railroad Milepost A-318.60, near Miriam, Churchill County, Nevada

VEHICLE 1: 2008 Peterbilt truck tractor in combination with two, 2007 Smithco side dump trailers

OPERATOR: John Davis Trucking Co., Inc. of Battle Mountain, Nevada

VEHICLE 2: Amtrak Train #5, the California Zephyr, consisting of two locomotives, a baggage car, a crew car, three passenger cars, a lounge car, a dining car, and three sleeper cars

OPERATOR: Amtrak operating on track owned and operated by the UPRR

DATE: June 24, 2011

TIME: Approximately 11:19 a.m. PDT

NTSB #: **HWY-11-MH-012**

B. SUMMARY

On Friday, June 24, 2011, about 11:19 a.m. Pacific Daylight Time, a 2008 Peterbilt truck tractor in combination with two 2007 side-dump trailers was traveling north on U.S. Highway 95 (US 95) in the vicinity of Miriam, Churchill County, Nevada. The combination vehicle, owned and operated by John Davis Trucking, was not loaded and was occupied by a 43-year-old driver.

The combination vehicle was approaching a protected railroad grade crossing that was owned and operated by the Union Pacific Railroad, but was also used by Amtrak passenger trains. At this location, US 95 was a two-lane, paved asphalt highway with a posted speed limit of 70 mph. In advance of the grade crossing, the highway incorporates a railroad crossing warning sign and pavement markings to alert motorists. The grade crossing was protected by gates and flashing red lights. Pairs of lights were mounted on support poles adjacent to each edge of the highway and also on cantilevers extending over each lane of the highway.

At the same time that the combination vehicle was nearing the crossing, Amtrak train #5, the *California Zephyr*, was approaching from the northeast. The train was on a scheduled trip from Chicago, Illinois, to Emeryville, California. Amtrak train #5 consisted of (from the front to the rear) two (2) locomotive units, a baggage car, a crew car, three (3) coach cars, a lounge car, a dining car, and three (3) sleeper cars.

A video camera and microphone mounted externally to the front of the train revealed that as the train approached the crossing, the locomotive horn was being operated and the crossing gates were in the down position to block highway traffic. The combination vehicle failed to stop before reaching the grade crossing and collided with the train. Tire marks from the rear of the combination vehicle were found in the northbound travel lane, beginning at a point about 247-299 feet prior to impact. The tire marks eventually crossed over the highway center line and into the southbound traffic lane before terminating at the crossing.

The truck tractor struck the left side of the crew car. During the collision sequence the truck tractor became embedded in the crew car, and a post-crash fire ensued. The fire consumed the truck tractor, the crew car, and the passenger car directly behind it. There were a total of 14 train crew members and 195 passengers on-board Amtrak train #5. As a result of the accident, the truck driver, a train crew member, and four train passengers were fatally injured. In addition, one train crew member was seriously injured, 12 crew members were not injured, four passengers received serious injuries, 58 passengers received minor injuries and 129 passengers were not injured.

END OF ACCIDENT SUMMARY