

2 CN trains derail in Alberta within 24 hours

CN is facing criticism from an Alberta mayor after two of its freight trains derailed in the province in less than 24 hours.

On Friday afternoon, a train derailed near Wildwood, Alta., about 120 kilometres west of Edmonton. CN said 15 cars carrying coal went off the tracks around 3:30 p.m. MT. On Thursday night, up to 20 CN train cars carrying peas derailed near Vermilion, Alta.

Yellowhead County Mayor Gerald Soroka is frustrated that CN did not quickly inform him about the derailment in Wildwood.

“This is one of the things that we’ve had concerns with in the past dealing with CN,” Soroka said, adding that sometimes it has taken as long as 12 hours before CN has been provided details about derailments.

“We want to make sure our residents are safe and our first responders are safe,” Soroka said. “Without CN communicating that to us, we have no idea the dangerous situation that [first responders] are going into.”

As of 6 p.m. on Friday night, Soroka still had not heard from CN. He found out about the derailment from a staff member who drove by the scene.

Jennie Maerz, who owns an ice cream shop in Wildwood, said CN needs to inform the town whenever there has been a derailment.

“It’s rather worrisome,” she said. “Luckily [our councillor] said there was nothing that would be a danger to us, but it’s kind of scary to have train derailments when you live very close to the track.”

CN spokesman Jim Feeny said there were no injuries in either derailment. Both trains were not carrying dangerous goods.

TSB investigators were sent to the site at Vermilion. The train was crossing a secondary highway at the time of the derailment, causing a temporary closure. Vermilion is about 200 kilometres east of Edmonton.