

Transportation Safety Board

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News release

TSB investigation highlights Watchlist issue and calls again for additional defences in rail signalled territory

Gatineau, Quebec, 18 October 2012 – The Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSB) today released its [investigation report \(R11E0063\)](#) into the June 2011 main-track collision that occurred in Edmonton, Alberta. The report focuses on the Watchlist issue of "following signal indications."

On 23 June 2011, CN freight train Q101, proceeding westward at 25 mph on the Wainwright Subdivision, collided with the tail end of stationary CN freight train A417 in Edmonton, Alberta. As a result of the collision, 2 intermodal flat cars (3 platforms) from train A417 derailed and the lead locomotive of train Q101 was damaged. There were no dangerous goods involved and no injuries.

The crew of train Q101 were unaware that train A417 had stopped on the north track ahead and despite having positively and correctly identified the signals, they did not reduce speed believing the track ahead to be clear. While travelling at 37 mph approaching the signal, the crew's view of the signal and of train A417 was obstructed by a stationary train on the adjacent south track. Without a clear and direct line of sight from further back, the train crew overestimated the distance to the signal and did not reduce train speed appropriately during the approach. Once a clear view of the signal was established, there was insufficient distance for the crew to stop train Q101 before it collided with the tail end of stationary train A417.

In this occurrence, the signal indications were appropriate and were correctly identified, but the subsequent train-control decisions were not appropriate leading to the collision. In the absence of additional backup safety defences in signalled territory, when signal indications are not correctly identified or followed, existing defences may not be adequate to reduce the risk of collision and derailment. The TSB has had an outstanding recommendation ([Recommendation R00-04](#)) for more than a decade calling for additional defences in signalled territory to help ensure that signal indications are consistently recognized and followed.

Following signal indications is identified as an issue on the TSB's [Watchlist](#). The Watchlist is a list of issues that the TSB has determined pose the most serious risk to Canada's transportation system.

The TSB is an independent agency that investigates marine, pipeline, railway and aviation transportation occurrences. Its sole aim is the advancement of transportation safety. It is not the function of the Board to assign fault or determine civil or criminal liability.

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