

special employee advisory

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To all Amtrak employees,

We have been involved in two safety incidents in the last week: Train 923 carrying U.S. Congressional members and staff in Crozet, Virginia, Wednesday, and Train 91 in Cayce, South Carolina, this morning. These incidents remind us that the safety of our operations is always our first priority, above all other objectives at Amtrak. Please know that each of us has the fundamental right to stop the operation, slow the operation or cancel the operation when we face a safety issue. Safety is always more important than on-time performance or the desire to complete an operation.

We always bear responsibility for our operations at Amtrak. The two most recent incidents of the past week were so unfortunate. Last Wednesday, we made national news when Train 923 hit a garbage truck that failed in an effort to “beat the train” by driving around cross bucks, lowered gates and flashing red signals. We will continue pressing U.S. policy makers to adequately fund the FRA Rail Crossing Grant Program to reduce the 2,000+ annual railroad crossing incidents and 200+ railroad crossing deaths in the U.S. With significant federal infrastructure investments, the industry can substantially reduce rail crossing incidents.

Sadly, the Train 91 accident caused the death of two dedicated and capable Amtrak professionals, our engineer and conductor on the head end. Please know we are committed to taking care of their loved ones and the customers injured on Train 91. Early media reports indicated that Amtrak was “on the wrong track” when we hit the CSX freight train, but that statement is inaccurate because we were on the track as dispatched by CSX, the host railroad. The NTSB must finish its investigation before all the facts are known, but it is confirmed that CSX owns, controls and dispatches the Columbia Subdivision where the accident occurred. CSX maintains all of the tracks and signal systems. Our crew on 91 was cleared to proceed by CSX dispatch, but CSX had lined and padlocked the switch off the mainline to the siding, causing the collision. This accident would have been prevented by PTC. Amtrak has been a leader in PTC installation. We will continue to press Congress and the U.S. DOT to fully support the PTC deadline of Dec. 31, 2018.

We must continue to work hard to improve safety at Amtrak and please stay focused on safe operations every day, on every train.

Thank you for your service to Amtrak,



Richard Anderson
President and CEO



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