



WMSC Commissioner Brief: W-0082 – Fatality – Yellow Line – April 2, 2020

Prepared for Washington Metrorail Safety Commission meeting on June 29, 2021

Safety event summary:

A Metrorail customer leapt from a raised mezzanine at L'Enfant Plaza Station onto the top of Yellow Line Train ID 301 at approximately 6:40 a.m. on April 2, 2020.

CCTV footage indicates that the customer landed on the second car of the southbound 7000 Series train toward Huntington as the train began to move.

As the train exited the tunnel to cross the bridge over the Potomac River, the customer transitioned to a standing position on top of the train's lead car.

When the train entered Pentagon station, the customer was motionless on top of the lead car.

The customer was not on top of the train when it entered Pentagon City station, and later investigation suggested the customer was dislodged from the roof as the train moved through a curve. Limited information from the autopsy report communicated to the WMSC by the Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD) suggests that the customer died at or close to the time of the event.

Metrorail was not aware of this event until April 5, 2020 when a track inspector discovered the customer unresponsive behind the third rail between the Pentagon and Pentagon City stations. At that time, the Arlington County Fire Department was called to respond, but the person was deceased.

Metrorail notified the WMSC within two hours of the discovery of the unresponsive customer.

Due to the curve of the track, lighting in the area, and position of the customer, it does not appear that the customer would have been visible to passing train operators from April 2-5. The track inspection on April 5 was the first in that area since the event occurred.

Probable Cause:

The customer intentionally placed themselves on top of a moving train, and that action went unnoticed.

Corrective Actions:

Metrorail took no specific corrective actions in response to this event.

WMSC staff observations:

This event highlights the importance of awareness, vigilance and system monitoring. While the system was substantially emptier than usual due to the public health emergency, the investigation suggests that had someone – Metrorail employee, customer or otherwise – noticed this event occurring and acted upon that information there may have been an opportunity to stop the train before it entered the tunnel on the Virginia side of the river.

The WMSC appreciates the significant effort Metrorail's Safety Department put into this investigation to trace the individual back to L'Enfant Plaza Station.

Due to the nature of the event, the medical examiner's office provided the autopsy report to the Metro Transit Police Department. Although MTPD verbally summarized the report to the WMSC, MTPD refused to provide a copy of that report to the WMSC despite assurances from the medical examiner that it was permissible to do so. Given the totality of the circumstances that have been identified in this investigation, WMSC staff recommend adopting this report in its current form due to the separate evidence, including CCTV footage, that demonstrate the most probable circumstances surrounding this event. The current WMSC Program Standard more explicitly specifies the requirements related to autopsy reports, when conducted.

Staff recommendation: Adopt final report.

FINAL REPORT OF INVESTIGATION A&I E20157**SMS 20200406#87288**

Date of Event:	4/2/2020
Type of Event:	Fatality
Incident Time:	Approximately 06:43 hrs.
Location:	Between Pentagon and Pentagon City Stations, Track 2
Time and How received by SAFE:	4/5/2020 at 08:45 hrs., On-Call Phone
WMSC Notification Time:	4/5/2020 at 10:43 hrs.
Responding Safety Officers:	WMATA SAFE: Yes WMSC: No Other: No
Rail Vehicle:	Train ID 301 7K Car Consist Lead Car 7550-7551.
Injuries:	Fatal
Damage:	No
Emergency Responders:	Arlington County Fire Department (ACFD), Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD), Office of Rail Transportation (RTRA), Emergency Management Fire Liaison, and SAFE

Executive Summary

On Sunday, April 5, 2020, at approximately 08:45 hrs., Track Maintenance Personnel (TRST) notified Rail Operations Control Center (ROCC) that an unresponsive person was discovered behind the third Rail at Chain Marker (CM) C2-279+00 (between Pentagon Rail Station and Pentagon City Rail Station) while performing a track inspection. Power was de-energized in the affected area. The Arlington County Fire Department (ACFD) responded to the scene; the unresponsive person was declared deceased and removed from the roadway.

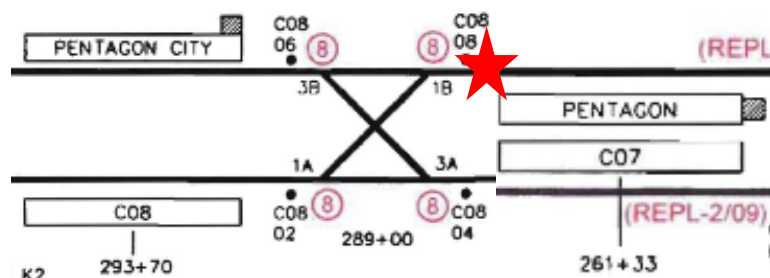
Based on review of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) station playback footage it was revealed that on Thursday, April 2, 2020, at 06:40 hrs., the customer placed themselves on the roof of a moving train (Train ID 301) at L'Enfant Plaza, Track 2, by jumping from the mezzanine that stretched over Track 1 and Track 2. The customer landed on the second from lead car 7551. Further video surveillance revealed the customer was lying motionless on top of Lead car 7550 as the train entered the following station, Pentagon

Station, Track 2, at 06:44 hrs., it is most probable the customer's motionless body was dislodged from the roof of Car 7550 as it transitioned through a curved section of track between Pentagon and Pentagon City stations.

Incident Site

Pentagon City, Track 2

Field Sketch/Schematics



Investigation

On Sunday morning, April 5, 2020, a TRST track inspector reported discovering an unresponsive person behind the third Rail at CM C2-279+00. Emergency personnel arrived on location, determined the person was deceased, and removed the person from the roadway. Review Maximo database work-order history determined there were no track inspections from April 2, 2020 to discovery date.

Based on a review of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) playback and Forward Facing Video from Rail Cars traversing the area, the following was determined:

Chronological Sequence of Event

On Thursday, April 2, 2020	
Time	Description of CCTV Video Playback
06:32 hrs.	A customer disembarked (Silver Line) Train ID 605 heading in the direction of Wiehle Reston lower level Track 2 L'Enfant Plaza and walks over to the Green/Yellow Track 1 on Upper Level of the station.
06:39 hrs.	Train ID 301 7K Car Consist Lead Car 7550-7551, enters L'Enfant Plaza Track 2 and makes a station stop.
06:40 hrs.	The customer runs from Track 1, up the escalator, and jumps over the mezzanine railing onto the Top of Car 7551 rear HVAC unit as the train began to move.

06:42 hrs.	The customer was observed lying on top of car 7550 HVAC transitioning to a standing position after the train exited L'Enfant Portal (outdoors) prior to crossing the L-Line Bridge.
06:44 hrs.	Train ID 301 enters Pentagon Station with motionless customer positioned near 9/10 door on top of car 7550
06:46 hrs.	Consist enters Pentagon City station; however, the customer is no longer present. Note: Based on the position of the motionless customer, the elevated left curve the train traversed through and location of where the deceased customer was found, it is most probable they were dislodged off the roof of Car 7550 as train transitioned through a section of curved track between Pentagon and Pentagon City station at approximately 06:45 hrs.

Note: As a result of lighting conditions in the affected area of track; based on Network Video Recording (NVR) forward facing camera review, there was no visual evidence showing the descendant on the roadway.

Office of Rail Transportation

Interviews

Train Operator (T/O)

Based on interviews with the affected consist T/O and subsequent T/O thereafter, personnel were unaware of any unusual activity that would have warranted attention.

Findings

- Based on the CCTV, the customer intentionally boarded the top of a moving train based on video.

Weather

At the time of the incident, the temperature was 47°F, and SAFE has concluded that weather was not a contributing factor in this incident (Weather source: National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) – Location: Washington, DC.)

Human Factors

Based on this event, there is no indication that T/O related human factors contributed to the outcome of this event.

Conclusion

Based on salient facts as a part of this investigation, CCTV, interviews, and MTPD's investigative report SAFE concluded, the customer jumped on top of a train that subsequently transitioned from portal to portal across the L Line Bridge. Upon entering Pentagon station, the customer showed no signs of life. After the train departed Pentagon station, the customer fell off the roof and landed between the third rail and tunnel wall as the train transitioned through a curve entering Pentagon City station.

Corrective Action

No corrective actions implemented as a result of this event.