



Table Top Training Drills

Table Top Training Exercise-August 2012

Operations in Proximity of Railroads

Fire and emergency department operations in close proximity of railroads require caution, communication, and coordination. The potential for accident, injury or death is elevated even if the details of the operation are minor. Units must always be alert for moving trains and the location of apparatus and personnel.

An example of this is shown in Near-Miss report [10-899](#):

Event Description

We responded to a small brush fire along the railroad tracks. The three engine company personnel, leaving the driver behind, climbed down a small embankment. The small fire was next to the tracks and was extinguished with an Indian tank. As we were picking up, we heard the whistle of a train coming. We climbed back up the embankment as the train got closer. Two of us, the officer and I, were the last to leave. As the train passed by, we both had to hold on to small trees to avoid being sucked down the hill. The force of the train going by created this force.

Lesson Learned

When working around railroad tracks, beware of all conditions. Situational awareness is the key. Personnel never need to be in the danger zone. When working around tracks, call for train times or stop traffic if possible.

Checklist

The Amtrak Police and Security Department has developed an Emergency Responder Safety Alert for the fire service to use as augmentation or development of SOP/SOGs.

AMTRAK POLICE AND SECURITY DEPARTMENT

EMERGENCY RESPONDER SAFETY ALERT March 24, 2010

F.D. OPERATIONS ON OR IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO RAILROAD PROPERTY

In light of a recent incident in Detroit, Michigan, involving a ladder truck struck by an Amtrak Train, emergency response personnel are reminded to keep the following points in mind prior to, and when responding to incidents on, or in close proximity to railroad property:

- Know what railroad controls train movement on the tracks that run through your response area.
- Make sure that your communications center/dispatcher has the proper emergency telephone contact numbers for the railroads in your response area.
- If the railroad(s) in your response area is equipped with an AC or DC overhead catenary system, or DC 3rd rail system used for traction power, know what railroad controls those systems.
- Pre-plan with the railroads that run through your response area (as you would for a target hazard building).

Prior to allowing your personnel to operate on, or about the tracks, ask yourself, do they really need to be on or about the tracks (risks vs. benefits), or can the railroad personnel handle the incident? If your answer is yes, then:

- Do not operate on, or in close proximity to a track (15 feet) unless you have received confirmation from the railroad, through your dispatcher/communications center, that all train movement has been stopped on the affected tracks.
- For areas where trains are powered by an overhead wire (catenary system), do not operate within 15' of the overhead wire until you receive confirmation, from the railroad, through your dispatcher/communications center, that power has been removed and the overhead wire has been grounded.
- For areas where trains are powered by a 3rd rail system, do not operate on or about the tracks until you receive confirmation, from the railroad, through your dispatcher/communications center, that 3rd rail power has been removed.
- Establish a command post and notify the railroad of the location of the command post.

For information on Passenger Train Emergency Response Training in New York State, contact the following:

AMTRAK - Office of Emergency Preparedness, 518-462-5743

Metro North Railroad - Office of Fire Prevention, 914-271-1608

Long Island Rail Road - (Nassau & Suffolk Counties) Office of the

Fire Marshal, 347-494-6031

Freight Operations - Operation Lifesaver, NYSOPLIFESAVER@aol.com

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