

## N.B. homes evacuated after fiery derailment

### Train carrying crude oil, propane

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A CN freight train carrying crude oil and propane derailed Tuesday night in a sparsely populated region of northwestern New Brunswick, forcing the evacuation of about two dozen homes after a fire that the rail company described as "significant."

CN spokesman Jim Feeny said 16 cars derailed near the village of Plaster Rock and of those, 15 are toward the end of the train and in the area of the fire. Four are carrying propane and another four are carrying crude oil, Feeny said.

It was unclear how many of the cars were actually burning because emergency personnel were keeping well back as a precaution, he said.

The train's engineer and conductor, the only people on the train, were not hurt in the derailment, he said, adding that it's unclear what caused the train to leave the tracks.

"We are deploying full emergency response ... from Moncton, Toronto and Montreal," Feeny said. "Their priority is to protect the safety of the people and the environment."

Sharon DeWitt, emergency measures co-ordinator for Plaster Rock, said homes were evacuated in the immediate area and firefighters, police and ambulances were on site. "The situation has not worsened," she said. "There's no cause for alarm."

The freight train was headed to Moncton from Central Canada when it ran into trouble around 7 p.m. about 150 kilometres northwest of Fredericton.

Rail safety has become a major issue since the catastrophic derailment in Lac-Mégantic, Que., last summer and as growing volumes of fuel oils and crude petroleum are carried by train across the country. In November, the federal government required rail companies to tell municipalities when they transport dangerous goods through their communities after provinces and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities demanded more transparency.

Thirteen cars on a CN freight train carrying a cargo of oil and liquefied petroleum gas went off the rails near Gainford, Alta., on Oct. 20. The community was evacuated as a precaution. Two days earlier, residents of Sexsmith, Alta., were forced from their homes when four CN rail cars carrying anhydrous ammonia left the rails.

After another CN derailment in Alberta in November, the provincial government ordered a report into whether rail companies are meeting their safety obligations.