

Rail safety: TSB discovers companies not reporting all derailments

Transportation Safety Board finds more than 100 incidents that weren't reported by CP, MM&A , CN

By Dave Seglins, [CBC News](#) Last Updated: Apr 07, 2014 11:53 AM ET

Related Stories

- [Runaway trains almost triple reported rate, CBC finds](#)
- [Rail safety: Train operators breaking more rules in recent years](#)
- [TSB says CN Rail failed to report hundreds of derailments, collisions](#)

Canada's Transportation Safety Board has unearthed fresh problems with its rail safety database after finding railway companies did not report more than 100 accidents, minor derailments and incidents.

TSB chief operating officer Jean Laporte confirms his agency in December began a review of all rail carriers after a CBC News investigation revealed that **CN Rail had not reported more than 1,800 mostly minor accidents and incidents between 2000 and 2007.**

The TSB database is used by safety investigators to analyze trends and spot potential risks across the rail system and has become increasingly important given the growing number of shipments of dangerous goods.

- [TSB says CN Rail failed to report hundreds of derailments, collisions](#)
- [Runaway trains almost triple reported rate, CBC finds](#)

The review is not yet complete, but already Laporte says he is considering whether to sanction CN, CP, and Montreal Maine and Atlantic (involved in the runaway train disaster in Lac Megantic, Que.).

"Well that is a question I've asked my team to come up with. I want to know was there any repeat of the problems we noted in 2007, and if so what steps do we need to take?" Laporte said.

Combing through CN, CP, MM&A records

Laporte says the TSB recently received "a large number" of records from CN Rail, Canada's largest freight carrier, dating back a number of years. Those records include some basic maintenance issues, which CN wasn't required to report.

However, Laporte says the materials also include some minor incidents or accidents which should have been reported to the TSB.

MM&A's unreported runaways

- Four cars rolled uncontrolled damaging three switches in a Farnham, Que., rail yard on Sept. 3, 2011. No injuries or derailment.
- Four cars rolled 800 metres through a Farham, Que., rail yard through three crossover switches on Dec. 27, 2012. No injuries.

Source: TSB

"There's most likely some reportable occurrences in that data set, yes," Laporte said. "But how many, I can't tell you at this time because we haven't done that detailed review. We've received the data, taken a quick look, scheduled some meetings."

CN has long held there has been confusion and misunderstanding over TSB regulations and the kinds of incidents affecting "safe operation" of railways that need to be reported.

CN spokesman Mark Hallman told CBC News in an emailed statement that he welcomes explicit new rules coming into effect on July 1 that will require companies to notify authorities of all "uncontrolled runaways" and all derailments, even if only a single wheel leaves the track.

CP Rail reveals 150 occurrences

The TSB grew concerned about CP Rail in early 2013 after noting the company changed how it was reporting accidents. Laporte says CP stopped notifying the TSB from one central office and began leaving it up to various regional offices to decide when to call in problems.

"CP subsequently conducted a review, and they came back and reported to us an additional 150 data records," Laporte said. "We've reviewed those records and most of those were reportable occurrences, although very minor. They were added to our database."

CP Rail in an email to CBC states these were "one-time ... inadvertent reporting gaps" stemming from changes within the company and that problem events have now all been duly reported and reconciled within the TSB's rail safety database.

MM&A had previous runaways

The TSB has also combed through the records of MM&A railway, as part of its investigation into the deadly Lac Megantic derailment which killed 47 people. Investigators have determined the company failed to

properly report 24 previous problems – including two cases of rail cars rolling away uncontrolled, four main-track derailments and 16 derailments on what is classified as “non-main track,” all of which the TSB notes “had minor consequences.”

Just last week, University of Calgary economist Jennifer Winter held a news conference in Ottawa calling on the federal government to provide better public access to rail safety data in the wake of the Lac Megantic tragedy and a string of fiery rail explosions in Canada and the U.S involving crude oil and other dangerous goods.

“This rash of disasters has led the public and policy-makers to question how safe are Canadian railroads?” Winters said, noting researchers, policy-makers, the TSB and Transport Canada all rely on this data.

The TSB has never fined a Canadian rail company for failures to report accidents and incidents.

“Accuracy of data is important because mis-measured data can give a false sense (bad or good) of the true state of rail safety in Canada,” Winter said.