

TSB says Ottawa must do more to keep Canadian railways safe

KIM MACKRAEL

OTTAWA — The Globe and Mail

Last updated Wednesday, Jan. 28 2015, 8:49 PM EST

Canada's transportation safety watchdog says it remains concerned about Ottawa's oversight of Canadian railway companies, 18 months after the devastating train crash in Lac-Mégantic.

The Transportation Safety Board made the comments Wednesday in its evaluation of Transport Canada's response to two recent TSB rail-safety recommendations.

While the TSB acknowledged progress on some rail-safety issues, it said the government must do more to ensure railways are following the safety management systems they have put in place.

The in-house safety management plans are developed by railway companies and reviewed and audited by the federal government. In recent years, both the TSB and the Auditor-General have found significant flaws in the oversight process.

"We want to make sure that Transport Canada is going to have a balanced approach to both inspections and audits and that if their inspections detect something [that's not in] compliance, that they're going to take corrective action," TSB chair Kathy Fox said.

She said Transport Canada has taken positive steps to help prevent runaway trains and seems to be on the right track. However, Ms. Fox noted that the new rules on runaways are not yet permanent and more details will be needed on the specific steps railways will need to take.