

SUMMARY

FATAL LEVEL CROSSING ACCIDENT IN PORI, FINLAND, ON 25 FEBRUARY 2010

On Thursday 25 February 2010 at 12:42, a fatal level-crossing accident occurred in Pori on the level crossing at the intersection of Tattaritie and the Mäntyluoto-Pori railway line. The driver of the train noticed that a passenger car was approaching the crossing from the right and gave a warning signal. It then became apparent to the driver of the train that the passenger car was not going to stop and the driver of the train put on the emergency brakes. The train ran into the left side of the car, the car jammed into the locomotive and the locomotive forced the car forward for 304 metres until the train came to a halt. The right buffer of the train penetrated the left side window of the car. The driver of the car died immediately from head and chest injuries. A car passenger died later in hospital from head and chest injuries.

The accident occurred because the driver of the car failed to notice the approaching train in time and was no longer able to stop or otherwise prevent the collision. Factors contributing to this were:

- The crossing was familiar to the driver of the car, which is a factor that generally reduces vigilance. The driver had also driven across the level crossing in the other direction moments before the accident.
- The level crossing was not equipped with warning installations.
- The level crossing was not equipped with proper waiting platforms and the road rises before the crossing to such an extent that drivers tend to avoid stopping before the crossing, especially in wet or slippery conditions.
- The car had tyres designated for summertime use.
- For the 30 metre stretch before the level crossing, the road had two intersections with give way signs.

In order to prevent similar accidents the investigation commission recommends the removal of the Tattari level crossing and the building of an alternative route via the residential area through a protected level crossing nearby. This would direct some traffic along a route that does not require a track crossing.

Identifying the location of the accident was not problematic because the location was familiar to the driver of the train, the traffic controller and the emergency response centre operator. The driver of the train made a direct call to the emergency response centre.

With the aim of making this practice the standard response, the investigation commission reiterates recommendation S211 of investigation report B1/2005R and B1/2009R: *That the instructions concerning the placing of emergency alarm calls be developed in such a manner that in all cases in which urgent rescue service assistance is required, a call be made to the general emergency number from the accident site in addition to the notification to traffic control.*