

SUMMARY

FATAL LEVEL CROSSING ACCIDENT IN VIHTI, FINLAND ON 14 JULY 2009

At 11:17 a.m. on Tuesday 14 July 2009, a fatal level crossing accident occurred on the Kotkaniementie unprotected level crossing in Ojakkala in Vihti. The accident occurred when a car travelling along Kotkaniementie road drove without stopping in front of a freight train en route to Riihimäki. A nine-year-old girl in the car was fatally injured. The car was wrecked beyond repair. Damage totalling €6,000 was caused to the rolling stock and to the track.

The cause of the accident lay in the car driver's completely failing to observe the approaching freight train.

Considering that the Kotkaniementie road is busy with domestic and international traffic, and that no other route to the Kotkaniemi area is available, the investigation commission recommends that the Kotkaniemi 1 level crossing be equipped with half-barriers.

The investigation commission also makes the following points and proposals:

- Education and campaigns on safe level crossing practices should be continued.
- Clear instructions should be provided for the clearing of sightlines at level crossings, covering both the division of responsibilities and scheduled actions. Clearing actions should also be monitored.
- Dv12 locomotives should be driven with the short front ahead, better enabling locomotive drivers to see approaching cars and issue a warning signal.
- Making the cabin colour of Dv12 locomotives brighter would make approaching trains more conspicuous.
- A locomotive should issue a warning signal whenever the simultaneous approach of a vehicle towards an unprotected level crossing is observed.