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Railroad accident kills BNSF worker

Incident is Potter's first train fatality since March 2002

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A Burlington Northern Santa Fe worker was killed Monday morning when he was struck by a train underneath, Amarillo Police Department. Lt. Gary Trupe said.

About 11:10 a.m., Amarillo police, fire and emergency personnel responded to a call at 10:30 a.m. that occurred on railroad tracks between South Williams Street and the Ross Street overpass in

The Federal Railroad Administration will investigate the accident, a spokesman said Monday.

Officers contacted BNSF officials, who reported the accident. Burlington employees were not on the one track to another when the car struck the man, pulling him under the car, Trupe said.

because they had discovered a leak and were going to repair it, he said.

Rail grinders are used to help maintain railroad tracks, BNSF spokesman Joe Faust said.

“They were moving it back to another position to try to fix that, and somehow through all miscommunication (occurred) and the gentleman was struck by the western end of the train underneath the train,” Trupe said.

The employee, whom Trupe described as a white male in his 50s, was pronounced dead at the scene. Trupe said BNSF is investigating the fatal accident and no criminal charges have been filed against the employee’s family late Monday.

Potter County Justice of the Peace Gary Jackson ordered an autopsy for the employee, Trupe said. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration spokesman Juan Rodriguez said the agency is determining whether they will conduct an investigation of the accident Monday afternoon.

Federal Railroad Administration spokesman Mark Murray said his agency’s policy is to investigate such incidents in the U.S.

The last reported railroad fatality in Potter County happened in March 2002 where a train derailed in the eastern part of the county, Federal Railroad Administration records show. An eastbound train carrying a caravan, killing a 44-year-old man inside the van. Potter County commissioners later closed the area.

The fatal accident marks the first major Amarillo railroad incident since a Sept. 16 rail car accident where an employee was operating a remote-control car in the process of putting together a train, Faust said, causing the car’s connecting device to puncture a neighboring car loaded with pentane, Faust said, causing the pentane car to leak and catch fire, he said.

Two locomotives and 26 cars were involved in the accident, a BNSF report said. Of all the hazardous material, four were damaged and one car released the hazardous material.

The explosion forced about 200 people to evacuate nearby homes, businesses and schools. The accident caused about \$853,000 in equipment damage and \$93,000 in yard damage, according to BNSF.

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