DERAILLED TRAIN THAT KILLED WORKER NOW LEAKING FUEL INTO NORTHERN MANITOBA RIVER

By The Canadian Press

A train derailed near Ponton, Manitoba. Transportation Safety Board

A train that derailed in northern Manitoba on Saturday, killing a railway worker, is leaking diesel fuel into the Metishto River.
Manitoba Sustainable Development says the fuel is from one of the locomotives. The province says spill recovery equipment is being used to clean up the fuel at the site.

The derailment happened around 6:15 p.m. Saturday, when a bridge on the Hudson Bay Rail line gave out near Ponton, Man., according to the Thompson Fire Department.

The train was carrying cargo including gasoline, liquid propane gas and butane, but there has been no indication that any of that has spilled or leaked.

The Arctic Gateway Group has said a second railway employee sustained serious injuries in the wreck, and VIA Rail says it has been forced to suspend operations between Winnipeg and Gillam because of the derailment.


Family of crew worker who died in train derailment has 'more questions than answers': Mayor of The Pas

Derailment death ‘heart wrenching’: The Pas' Mayor
The Transportation Safety Board of Canada said it deployed an investigator to the fatal train derailment near Ponton, Man. Monday.

On Saturday around 6:15 p.m. two crew members became trapped in the front locomotive after the train went off the track.

RCMP said a 38-year-old man is dead, and a 59-year-old man was seriously injured. Both men are from The Pas.

Thompson Fire and Emergency Services told CTV News the derailment happened on a bridge.

Arctic Gateway Group is the new owner of Hudson Bay Railway.

On Monday Murad Al-Katib, CEO of AGT Food and Ingredients, one of the railway ownership group’s partners, told CTV News he met with the family of the man who died. The company said it’s cooperating with authorities.

He said the 38-year-old man was a conductor and the 59-year-old man is an engineer. He said they were the only two people on the train.

Mayor of The Pas, Jim Scott, has also been in contact with family of the man who died.

“It was shocking because we are a small community of about 5300, 5400 people, so everybody knows everybody. It was literally heart-wrenching,” said Scott in a phone interview with CTV News.

“They’re very much a generational railroad family. The fellow who passed, his stepfather over 40 years with the railroad, his grandfather was a lifetime worker on the railroad,” he said.

“They have more questions than answers and they don’t understand how this could have happened.”

Scott said The Pas is a big railway town and the site of the Hudson Bay Railway rail yard.

Transport Canada and RCMP are investigating.

“Out of respect for the family and friends of the employees involved in the Hudson Bay Railway derailment, Transport Canada is not releasing any photos taken at the derailment site,” Transport Canada said in statement to CTV News.

Scott said the recent jubilation in town over the railway’s sale and a $117 million investment from the federal government isn’t there right now, but he said it will come back in time.
“That rail line is not just going to be prepared, it’s going to be fixed properly and a lot of people that were laid off are going to go back to work. That’s the good news of it, but that doesn’t matter right now, it just doesn’t matter right now,” said Scott.
RCMP and team with Hudson Bay Railway on scene near fatal Manitoba train derailment west of Ponton. It happened around 6:15 pm Saturday. 38 y/o man died. 59 y/o man seriously injured. Both crew members from The Pas. @ctvwinnipeg

7:22 PM - Sep 17, 2018
Crew member dead after train derailment south of Thompson, another seriously injured

Arctic Gateway Group said one of its employees has died following a train derailment south of Thompson, Man. Saturday evening.

“Sadly, one of our employees working on the locomotive has been confirmed by authorities as deceased. A second employee has sustained serious injuries and has been airlifted to hospital. The RCMP is in the process of notifying the families. The Arctic Gateway Group will be also be making direct contact with family members and all of our employees and communities in the coming days as we all attempt to cope with this tragedy,” said a news release issued by the company Sunday afternoon.

Thompson Fire and Emergency Services said two workers were extricated from a train which derailed near Ponton, Man., about 160 km south of Thompson, Saturday evening around 6:15 p.m.

Deputy Chief Selby Brown said the workers were trapped in the train for hours as first responders tried to free them.

He said one of the people sustained serious injuries in the incident, after the train went off the tracks on a washed-out trestle bridge in a swampy area at about 6:30 p.m.

It wasn't until 1:30 a.m. that both workers were freed.

RCMP said a 38-year-old man from The Pas was pronounced dead on scene.
Brown said the train was carrying a mix of butane and petroleum gas, and no leaks were reported.

“There were a total of 27 rail cars. About five or six were off the track, the rest in disarray,” said Lt. Adrienne Burton with Thompson Fire and Emergency Services in a phone call with CTV News Sunday.

“It wasn’t initially clear if there was a leak, but it was later determined, there was no risk to public safety,” Burton said.

"On behalf of the entire Arctic Gateway Group, and all of our employees, our hearts go out to the families of these dedicated employees", said Murad Al-Katib, one of the group's partners.

Al-Katib told CTV News he was travelling to site Sunday. He said inspections have been done on a regular basis along the rail line, including this week.

"We have said repeatedly that we will not compromise speed for safety and this is a stark reminder for us as we repair the northern section of the rail line to Churchill."

Arctic Gateway Group said it is cooperating with emergency services teams on site and will also be conducting a full internal review to determine the cause of the derailment.

The group said members of AGT’s Mobil rail team have also been dispatched to the site of the derailment to join the Superintendent of the Hudson Bay Railway who has been present at the scene of the derailment since Saturday night.

TRAPPED IN FRONT LOCOMOTIVE

Burton said both employees are men and are conductors with Hudson Bay Rail Line.

“They were trapped in the front locomotive,” she said. “Because of the way of the train derailed.”

Burton said one man was taken to hospital in Thompson and then airlifted to Winnipeg. RCMP said the 59-year-old man from The Pas suffered life-threatening injuries.

TRAIN DERAILED ON A BRIDGE

The derailment happened on a bridge over a small creek, the bridge gave way, Burton said.

“It appeared the ground beneath the tracks eroded due to rain, that was our guess,” she said.

On Monday the Transportation Safety Board said in a statement it is sending an investigator to the derailment to "gather information and assess the occurrence."

RCMP said it will be assisting Transport Canada in its investigation.

-With files from The Canadian Press
Update: HBR freight train derailment near Ponton kills one crew member and seriously injures another

Thompson Citizen

SEPTEMBER 16, 2018 12:25 PM

A train derailed near Ponton Sept. 15, trapping two men. One was pronounced dead at the scene and the other airlifted to hospital in Winnipeg with serious injuries early Sunday morning.

A 38-year-old man died and a 59-year-old man suffered life-threatening injuries in a train derailment on the Hudson Bay Railway (HBR) about 12 kilometres west of Ponton on Sept. 15.

The accident was reported to the Wabowden RCMP around 5:45 p.m. on Saturday and they were advised that two crew members were trapped on board the train, which was carrying gasoline and propane. Officers were flown to the crash scene and remained there until rescue personnel and specialized equipment could be brought in. The 38-year-old was pronounced dead at the scene while the other man was removed from the train early Sunday morning and airlifted to hospital in Winnipeg where he was in critical condition.

“We have immediately convened an internal investigation,” said AGT Foods CEO Murad Al-Katib in a statement on Facebook on behalf of the Arctic Gateway group that purchased the HBR and the Port of Churchill from previous owner OmniTrax at the end of August. “The
RCMP will also be starting an investigation, which we are fully supporting and participating in. We have dispatched members of our rail division senior management team to the site. I am also travelling to the site to aid in any way I can. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of those involved in the derailment, and with our employees.”

The federal government had just announced the day before the accident that it was contributing $117 million towards the purchase and repair of the HBR, the northern section of which between Gillam and Churchill had been closed for over a year due to damage caused by flooding in the spring of 2017.

“Our deepest condolences are extended to the family of the deceased HBR engineer, and our thoughts and prayers are with the surviving injured employee,” said a statement on Facebook from the Thompson Professional Firefighters Association, whose members employed by Thompson Fire & Emergency Services were among those who responded to the accident. “This was an extremely complex incident and likely one of the larger multi-agency responses to take place in Northern Manitoba in some time. We want to acknowledge Snow Lake Fire & EMS, Wabowden Fire & EMS, The Pas EMS, RCMP from Wabowden, Snow Lake and Thompson detachments as well as employees from HBR and Custom Helicopters. We know everyone’s skill, technical knowledge and heart and soul came into play last night. Thank you for your dedication and professionalism.”

"Our thoughts are with the friends, families, and coworkers of the two men involved in this tragic accident," said Doug Finnson, president of the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference (TCRC), the union that represents locomotive engineers and conductors who work for HBR. "As we mourn the loss of one of our Teamster brothers, we are also praying for the recovery of the man who remains in hospital at this time."

Finnson said the TCRC had written to the owners of Arctic Gateway to ask to be made aware of developments as they arise and that the union intends to fully cooperate with any investigation by HBR or the Transportation Safety Board (TSB) of Canada. The derailment occurred at the Minago River crossing west of the junction of Highway 6 and Highway 39 about 150 kilometres southwest of Thompson. The cause has not been released, but it has been reported that the the accident was caused by the collapse of a bridge, support for which may have been eroded by rainfall.
Three engine cars were transporting 27 cars carrying liquefied petroleum but Arctic Gateway said in a statement that there wasn’t significant environmental damage.
A Transportation Safety Board spokesperson told the CBC that they were aware of the derailment and were gathering information but had not decided whether to deploy investigators to the scene.

An RCMP spokesman told CBC news that a helicopter pilot noticed the accident and alerted police. He also said that the two men were conscious when police arrived and told the officers that they came around a bend in the track and did not see a bridge in front of them. “We are heartbroken to hear of the death of a railway worker in last night’s derailment near Wabowden,” said Premier Brian Pallister on Twitter. “Our condolences go to his family and friends. We wish a full recovery to his co-worker, and express our appreciation to the brave first responders who attended at the scene.”


**Washout, possibly due to beaver, confirmed at site of deadly train derailment in northern Manitoba**

*Transportation Safety Board still probing causes*

Ian Froese · CBC News · Posted: Sep 19, 2018 2:55 PM CT | Last Updated: September 19

An aerial view of the train derailment near Ponton, Man. (Submitted/Transportation Safety Board)

The Transportation Safety Board has confirmed there was a washout on the northern Manitoba railway where a fatal train derailment occurred on Saturday.
Jerry Berriault, a regional senior investigator, said the agency is continuing to investigate, but could not definitively state that the crash, which claimed one life and seriously injured another worker, was caused by the washout.

Berriault said two culverts became blocked along the remote railway sometime after the last inspection on Thursday, obstructing water flow and forcing the grade underneath the railway to wash away.

The train was travelling north at around 25 miles per hour when it encountered the washout, near Ponton, Man., around 5:45 p.m.

"It came to a sudden and immediate stop with some fairly catastrophic results," he said.

Berriault described the washed-out section as a raised bank, 12 feet above the creek, instead of a bridge.

He said there's been heavy rains and high water in the area, halfway between The Pas and Thompson, since May.

"At some point they became blocked or were overwhelmed with volume of water, that caused the washout."

He said there was also a release of water upstream, possibly due to beaver activity or natural flows.

Inspected two days before
Murad Al-Katib, a spokesperson for the conglomerate that owns the rail line, previously told CBC News the track was inspected twice within the last week, including a visit two days before the derailment.

The washout eliminated the subgrade, creating a gap of between 30-50 feet, Berriault said.

"The lead locomotive hit the embankment on the north side after the washout."
The crash site is 17 kilometres south of where Highway 6 crosses the railway.

RCMP say a 38-year-old, who died, and a 59-year-old were trapped in the locomotive of a freight train for several hours after it derailed.

The man who died was the train conductor and the other employee was an engineer, said Al-Katib, president of AGT Foods. They were both from The Pas.

Diesel leak
There was no indication the freight train's cargo of gasoline, liquid propane gas and butane leaked, but a spill of diesel fuel from the locomotive emptied into a nearby waterway, the provincial government confirmed Wednesday. Specialized equipment will assist with clean-up efforts.

Berriault said the crash caused the derailment of three locomotives and four railcars, two of which were holding propane.

It was announced in late August that Al-Katib's group had purchased, from Denver-based Omnitrax, the flood-damaged Hudson Bay Railway line between Winnipeg and Churchill.

The consortium includes Toronto-based Fairfax Financial Holdings and Manitoba's Missinippi Rail Limited Partnership, as well as Saskatchewan-based AGT.

Via Rail has temporary suspended passenger service between Winnipeg and Gillam until the railway is deemed safe. No timeline for restoration has been announced.