

SUMMARY

FATAL LEVEL CROSSING ACCIDENT IN NÄRPIÖ, FINLAND, ON 17 JANUARY 2007

On Wednesday 17 January 2007 at 10.50 a.m. an accident occurred in Närpiö in which a train carrying lumber on its way from Seinäjoki to Kaskinen collided with a van at an unprotected level crossing.

The van driver perished in the accident, and the van was wrecked beyond repair, while the front of the locomotive suffered only minor damage.

The accident was caused by the van driver not driving clear of the train travelling from the right. It is obvious that the driver either did not look towards the approaching train or did not notice it.

To prevent similar accidents, the Accident Investigation Board of Finland recommends that delivery services and their planning aim to avoid unprotected level crossings. Furthermore, level crossing warnings placed between the delivered material and the use of a GPS device notifying of level crossings would improve safety. The Investigation Commission also recommends that the use of safety belts be extended to apply to delivery vehicle drivers and passengers irrespective of the driving distance. In addition, the Investigation Commission would reiterate its recommendation, S1/05R/S216, regarding the lowering of the speed limit to 50 km/h on unprotected level crossings.