

SUMMARY

FATAL LEVEL CROSSING ACCIDENT IN LAUKAA, FINLAND, ON 16 DECEMBER 2009

On Wednesday 16 December 2009 at 13:26 p.m., a fatal level crossing accident occurred on the Lemettilä unprotected level crossing in Laukaa municipality. The accident occurred when a van with a couple inside drove in front of a freight train en route from Jyväskylä to Äänekoski. The van's driver and passenger died immediately from the injuries received. The damage caused by the accident to rolling stock amounted to €1,300.

The cause of the accident was that the van driver drove onto the level crossing without apparently observing the train approaching from the right. A contributing factor was the fact that, when approached, the crossing looks safe, rendered observation more difficult. Special care should have been exercised, however, considering that the road slopes downwards before the level crossing, that there is a road crossing close to the level crossing and that the sun was shining directly towards the approaching van.

In order to prevent similar accidents, the investigation commission recommends the removal of the Lemettilä unprotected level crossing. Alternatively, the level crossing should be equipped with a half-barrier installation.