

SUMMARY

FATAL LEVEL CROSSING ACCIDENT IN MUSTIO, RAASEPORI, FINLAND, ON 25 APRIL 2009

At 1:08 p.m. on Saturday 25 April 2009, a level crossing accident occurred in Mustio in Raasepori involving a car and a freight train en route from Kirkniemi to Karjaa. The accident proved fatal to the car driver, while the engine driver escaped uninjured. While the car was wrecked beyond repair, the train sustained only minor damage.

The direct cause of the accident lay in the car's driving onto the level crossing while the freight train was approaching simultaneously from the right. It has not been ascertained why the car driver drove onto the level crossing. The following may have played a role in this decision:

- the car driver did not observe the approaching train, or judged that it would be possible to make the crossing before the train's arrival
- the driver accidentally pressed the accelerator instead of the brakes
- the driver noticed the train but had insufficient time to stop the car before reaching the crossing.

In order to prevent similar accidents, the investigation commission recommends that the Ingvallsby unprotected level crossing be removed. In addition, the investigation commission reiterates recommendation S211 concerning the establishment of a direct mobile phone connection from accident scenes to the emergency response centre. Recommendation S211 is also supported by the Ministry of the Interior Rescue Department and the Emergency Response Centre Administration. Furthermore, the Emergency Response Centre Administration recommends that VR Group equip all trains with the appropriate GPS devices, allowing the relay of accident location information to the emergency response centre clearly and without delay.

The investigation commission also notes that the response process to level crossing accidents could be determined by road vehicle type and that the right to drive could be restricted for drivers who have an illness or who are on permanent medication affecting their driving ability.