

Live trade diary: No Nash deal | Bruce Arthur's take | Kostitsyn trade | Buyers and sellers | On the radar

National Post

Three killed in Via Rail train derailment in Burlington, Ont.

Joe Rayment Feb 26 2012 – 4:10 PM ET | Last Updated: Feb 26, 2012 9:02 PM ET

Three Via Rail employees were killed and dozens of passengers were sent to hospital when a train derailed in Burlington, Ont., on its way to Toronto Sunday afternoon

Related

Photos: Three killed in Via Rail train derailment in Burlington, Ont

Via Rail's statement

Three killed in Via Rail train derailment in Burlington, Ont.



At least six cars went off the tracks around 3:30 p.m. while travelling from Niagara Falls to Toronto. Tyler Anderson/National Post
Toronto and Hamilton both sent EMS crews to help local crews tend to victims. Air ambulances were also on scene

“There were one locomotive and five cars on the train, all of which derailed,” Via Rail said in a statement Sunday night.

Via said three passengers were airlifted to hospital with serious injuries and 42 other passengers and one crew member were also taken to local hospitals.

A passenger told the Hamilton Spectator that there was “sheer panic” on the train.

“It felt like we hit some bumps in the road and then the train jumped and it kept jumping and it tipped over to the side,” Hannah Lemke, 22, told the newspaper. “Everything went flying, people were screaming. It felt like forever. I’m sure it was only a couple of seconds.”

The rail company said it was trying to determine what caused the accident in conjunction with the Transportation Safety Board, which was sending a team to the scene to investigate the crash

As many as 60 people were trapped after the crash, according to reports, all of whom have since been freed. The incident happened around 3:30 p.m. while train 92 was travelling from Niagara Falls, Ont., to Toronto.

Michelle Lamarche of Via Rail says the incident happened two stations west of Toronto, near Aldershot, and that the train had 75 passengers on board.

Toronto and Hamilton both sent EMS crews to help local responders tend to victims. Air ambulances were also on scene.

Hamilton Health Sciences declared a code orange — which means its facing an external disaster — as victims from the scene arrived at hospital.

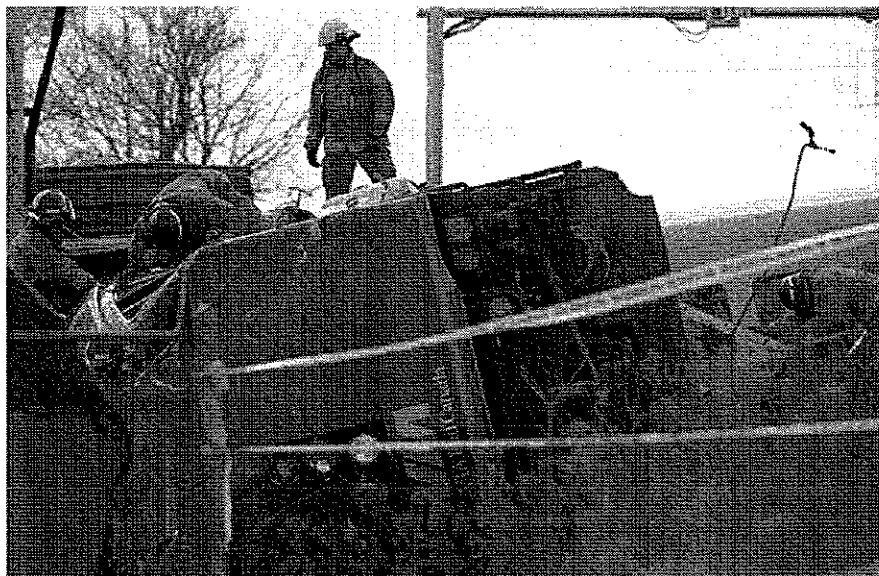
Burlington is about 60 kilometres southwest of Toronto. Other trains were expected to be affected by the accident which blocked tracks at the site. GO Trains are currently turning back at Burlington

Via set up a special number to inquire about passengers: 1-888-842-6141.

Malcolm Andrews, a Via Rail spokesman, couldn't say how many engineers or passengers have been killed in passenger train derailments in Canada.

"There have been very few [deaths]," he said. "I have been here for 35 years and this is extremely rare. Canada has one of the safest records of any railway in the world.

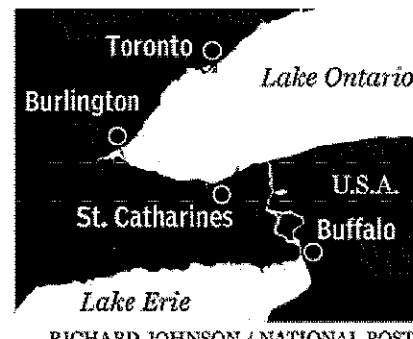
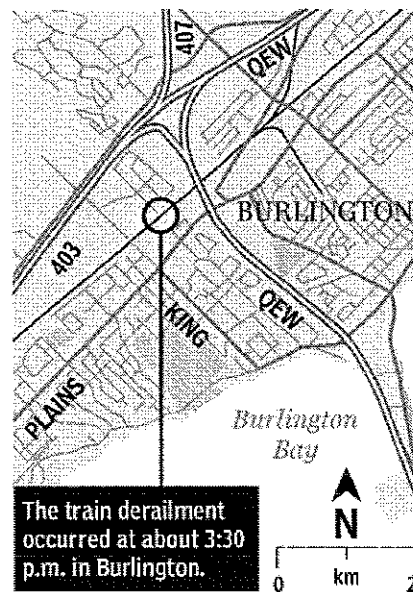
"Our focus today is on the comfort and safety of our crew members and passengers." In July 2011, a Via Rail train travelling from Oshawa, Ont , to Windsor, Ont , derailed after it hit a pickup truck.



Rescue tend to the scene of the Via Rail train after a derailment in Burlington, Ont. on Sunday. Tyler Anderson/National Post

THREE DEAD IN DERAILMENT

A Toronto-bound train from the Niagara area went off the tracks on Sunday.



CLICK TO ENLARGE

Recent train wrecks in Canada

- Seven people received minor injuries when a Via Rail train travelling from Montreal to Halifax derailed and slammed into a house in February 2010. That derailment, which involved two locomotives and seven wagons going off the tracks, happened near Quebec City.
- One of the deadliest crashes involving a Via Rail train occurred in February 1986 in Alberta. The passenger train collided with a CN freight train 17 kilometres west of the community of Hinton. Twenty-three people died. Another 71 people sustained injuries in the crash, which was later blamed on human error.
- A Via Rail train travelling from Oshawa to Windsor, Ont., derailed in July 2011 after it hit a pickup truck. The driver of the truck, a 24-year-old man, sustained serious injuries. Six passengers from the train were sent to hospital with minor injuries.
- A father and his two school-age daughters were killed when the car they were riding in was struck by a Via Rail passenger train in Edmonton in 2010. None of the passengers on board the train, which was traveling from Toronto to Vancouver, were injured. Investigators at the time were considering whether weather played a factor in the accident, as it was snowing when the train hit the vehicle.

National Post with files from Postmedia News

VIA RAIL'S STATEMENT FOLLOWING THE BURLINGTON DERAILMENT

Reports of numerous passenger injuries – Three crew fatalities

MONTRÉAL — VIA Rail Canada train number 92, en route from Niagara Falls to Toronto, was involved in an accident at approximately 3:30pm local time today. The incident occurred in the Aldershot, Ontario area.

There were 75 passengers on board the train at the time of the accident. There are reports of several injuries to passengers and three fatalities, all VIA crew members who were in the locomotive at the time of the accident.

There were one locomotive and five cars on the train, all of which derailed. Emergency services were on the scene shortly after it occurred and are attending to those requiring their assistance.

Three passengers were airlifted to hospital with serious injuries. 42 other passengers and one crew members were also taken to local hospitals.

All other passengers have been removed from the train and are either en route to Toronto or will be shortly.

The cause of the accident is not known at this time. VIA will collaborate fully with the Transportation Safety Board of Canada, which is investigating.

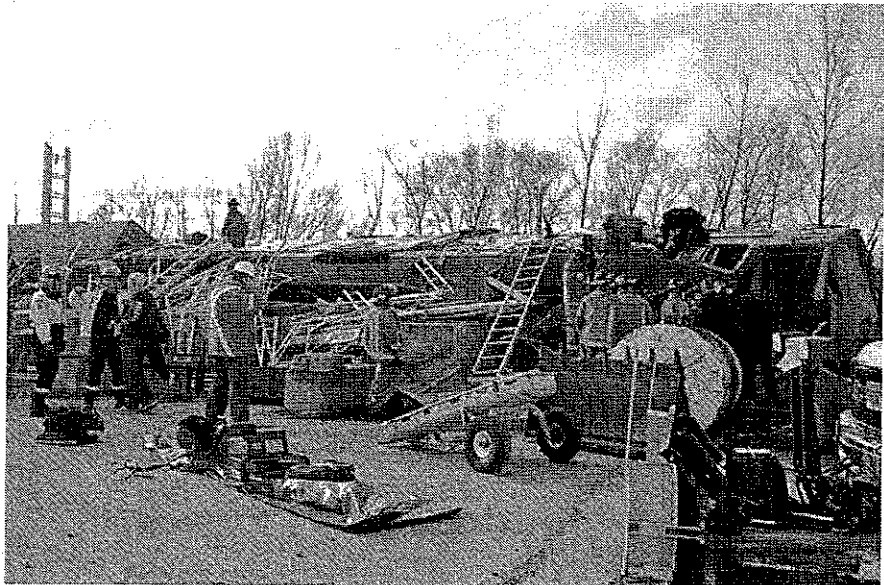
Anyone seeking information about passengers who may have been on this train may call a special number set up for this purpose, at 1-888-842-6141.

Other VIA trains will be affected due to the tracks being blocked at the scene of the accident. Passengers travelling in southwestern Ontario later today can check on the status of their train at 1-888-VIA-RAIL (888-842-7245) or at viarail.ca

Further details will be provided as they are known.



The VIA Rail train, which was travelling from Niagara Falls to Toronto with about 75 passengers, derailed at 3:30 p.m. EST. David Ritchie for National Post



David Ritchie for National Post