

Railway accident investigation report

Railway operator : West Japan Railway Company

Accident type : Level crossing accident

Date and time : About 8:21, February 13, 2015

Location : Hachinin-yama level crossing, class one level crossing, located at around 166,410 m from the origin at Kobe station, between Nishiachi station and Shin-Kurashiki station, double track, San-yo Line, Kurashiki City, Okayama Prefecture

SUMMARY

On February 13, 2015, the outbound local Electric 1731M train, composed of 6 vehicles, started from Okayama station bound for Fukuyama station, San-yo Line of West Japan Railway Company, departed from Nishiach station on schedule, 08:19. The driver of the train cruising with the speed of about 95 km/h, noticed the stop signal of the obstruction warning signal at Hachinin-yama level crossing and, at the same time, noticed the truck stopped in the level crossing, so that he immediately took an emergency brake and blew the whistle, but it was too late, the train collided with the truck and stopped at about 210 m passed the level crossing.

There were about 300 passengers, the train driver and the conductor onboard the train, among them, 44 passengers and the train driver were injured, including one seriously injured passenger. The driver of the truck was not injured because he evacuated out of the level crossing when the collision occurred.

The train was not derailed but damaged in the front part of the first vehicle and in the right side of the first and the second vehicles. The truck was seriously damaged but fire was not ignited.

PROBABLE CAUSES

It is certain that the accident had occurred because the truck had stopped in Hachinin-yama level crossing road, the approaching train collided with the truck.

It is somewhat likely that the truck had stopped in the level crossing because the power of engine could not transfer to the drive shaft due to the trouble during switching operation for torque conversion in the onboard transmission. However, it could not be determined why these situations were occurred because there were no records about time in the recording device of the control unit of the truck, and the status of the transmission just before the accident were not identified.

It is highly probable that the train could not stop before the level crossing because the train driver could not notice the obstacle in the level crossing promptly. It is somewhat likely that the reason why the train driver could not notice the obstacle promptly, was related with that there were over 300 m long section where the driver of the outbound train could not confirm stop signal indication of the obstruction warning signal, as the obstruction warning signal against the outbound trains in the level crossing was in the blind angle by the track side electrification poles.