




March 18, 2024

To: Members of the Board of Directors

From: Jason Jewell, Managing Director 

Subject: Fiscal Year 2023-24 Second Quarter Amtrak Pacific Surfliner System Safety and Incident Report

Overview

The Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency operating agreement with Amtrak includes police services to provide a safe, secure, and reliable service to Pacific Surfliner crews and passengers. These police services have a considerable effect on repeat ridership, based on the customer travel experience. This report presents a summary on system safety and incidents for Amtrak Pacific Surfliner service during the second quarter of fiscal year 2023-24, covering the months of October, November, and December 2023.

Recommendation

Receive and file as an information item.

Background

The Amtrak Pacific Surfliner route operates in a complex environment, along the 351-mile Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) rail corridor, which traverses through a six-county coastal region in Southern California. The Amtrak Police Department (APD) provides law enforcement officers along the entire corridor to ensure the safety and security of Pacific Surfliner employees, passengers, and infrastructure. These officers are based out of three substations, San Diego Santa Fe Depot, Los Angeles Union Station, and the Santa Barbara Amtrak station.

Discussion

This report presents system safety and incident information, covering trespasser strikes by Pacific Surfliner trains, reported crimes on Pacific Surfliner trains and or at stations, response, and mitigation measures to these crimes for the second quarter of fiscal year (FY) 2023-24.

Like the first quarter of this fiscal year, the data in this report was collected using a more in-depth process than previous reports, allowing greater insight into incidents and trends. As such, this report may depict an increase in incidents when compared to previous fiscal years.

Reported Crimes

Trespass of Real Property – Non collision

There were **five** incidents of individuals and or vehicles trespassing on tracks, that did not involve a collision.

Of the five incidents, four involved trains entering “emergency braking” to avoid collisions with trespassers or vehicles on the track. The fifth involved a group of trespassers near the community of Chatsworth, inside tunnel 28, along the Metrolink Ventura Subdivision. During this incident, the trespassers moved along the wall of the tunnel, as the engineer blew his horn to warn of the impending collision.

Trespass of Real Property – Collisions

There were **eleven** reported trespasser or vehicle strikes involving Pacific Surfliner trains. Of these reported strikes, five proved to be non-fatal and six proved to be fatal.

Of the five non-fatal accidents, two were incurred by train 761. One incident occurred in the City of Santa Ana, when the driver of a vehicle stopped his vehicle on the tracks at the 17th Street and Lincoln Ave crossing, in a line of cars, awaiting a community handout. As the train approached, the vehicle failed to move, causing the train to collide with the rear portion of the vehicle, which was blocking the tracks. This incident caused an approximate 1-hour and 50-minute delay. The other occurred near the City of Goleta, when the train struck an unoccupied vehicle, which appeared to be abandoned, near milepost (MP) 342.8 on the Santa Barbara Subdivision (not near a crossing). This incident caused a 2-hour delay.

Another non-fatal collision occurred when train 790 struck a semi-truck near east of the Camarillo station along the Santa Barbara subdivision. In this incident, the vehicle became disabled on the railroad track. As the train approached, the emergency braking system was applied, however, the train was unable to stop in time, and struck the trailer portion of the truck. The impact caused significant damage to several cars on the train. Train 790 was terminated as a result of this collision, and all passengers were transferred to replacement buses.

Of the two remaining non-fatal collision, one involved train 564 in San Diego and involved a subject, who upon being struck, fled the location on foot. This collision caused a 2-hour delay due to the need for local law enforcement to locate the individual and assess their condition. The second occurred near the City of Fullerton, when train 785 clipped a female trespasser, who was attempting to clear the tracks as the train approached. The delay to train 785, because of this incident, was 1-hour and 18-minutes.

Of the six fatal collisions, three appeared to have been intentional. One such incident occurred in the city of Ventura, when train 761 struck a trespasser on the tracks,

causing a 1 hour and 42-minute delay. The second occurred in the City of Santa Barbara, also by train 761, when it struck a trespasser, walking on the tracks, despite several warnings by the engineer. The third incident was incurred by train 794 near the City of Anaheim, when it struck a trespasser on the tracks. This incident caused a 2-hour delay.

Of the remaining three fatal collisions, one involved train 761 near Pismo Beach, when it struck a trespasser walking on the tracks, who appeared to be trying to get out of the path of the train. This collision caused train 761 to be delayed by 1-hour and 42-minutes. Another collision occurred when train 769 struck a trespasser, who at the last minute appeared to be reaching for the leash of a dog that wandered onto the tracks as the train approached. This accident caused a one-hour delay.

Lastly, train 774 was involved in a fatal strike near Santa Barbara. This incident caused a 1-hour and 41-minute delay.

In total, there were approximately 19 hours and 30 minutes in delays due to trespasser strikes.

Larceny/Theft

There was a total of **six** reported thefts on board trains during this quarter. Four of these larceny/thefts were of customer property and involved the stolen property being removed from luggage racks on trains 581, 572, 769, and 774. Of the two additional reports of theft, one occurred in the café car of train 581, when the suspect removed property from the location without paying. The final theft occurred on train 591, when an employee's bag was taken.

Disorderly Conduct

There were **six** reports of disorderly conduct on board trains. Three of these disorderly conduct incidents were onboard trains 777 and 583 and involved alcohol. Two additional incidents of subjects disturbing the peace were reported on trains 784 and 794, and the two remaining incidents included subjects exhibiting loud and unreasonable noise on train 777.

Of these incidents, one subject was arrested.

Assaults

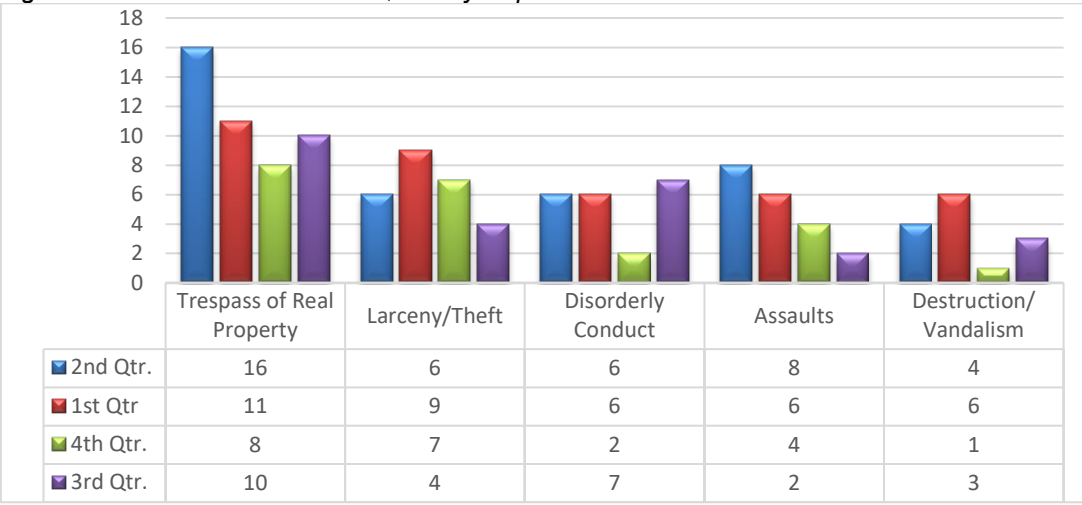
There were **eight** total assaults reported during this quarter on board Pacific Surfliner trains. Four of these incidents involved fare evaders assaulting conductors, two involved Amtrak employees being assaulted by passengers, and two were assaults between passengers.

Vandalism

There were **four** incidents of Vandalism reported during this quarter. One incident occurred onboard train 761, when an individual removed a window and stepped out of the train as it was stopped at Solano Beach. The additional three incidents of vandalism occurred at three separate stations, Chatsworth, City of Goleta, and the City of Oceanside.

At the Chatsworth and the City of Goleta stations, display cases were shattered using an unknown item by unknown person(s), and at the City of Oceanside, an unknown person(s) damaged an exterior lock to the building.

Figure 1: Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Quarterly Reported Crimes



Response and Mitigation Measures

There was a noticeable rise in trespasser incidents during this quarter, with sixteen reported incidents. Although there was no set pattern or location to these incidents, five of the sixteen, or thirty-one percent, involved train 761.

As a result, during the month of December, officers were therefore directed to increase their presence on board trains. This mission was aided by APD officers from throughout the country, who volunteered to deploy as part of the Western Division group.

A significant part of the LOSSAN Agency's proactive efforts at increasing safety and reducing trespasser incidents is the Board approved Operation Safe Surfs rail safety initiative. The first wave of efforts in Operation Safe Surfs began in earnest with the launch of public service announcements (PSA) on both digital and streaming television services as well as digital radio. So far, the video PSA has been watched 300,000 times, reaching an estimated 2.4 million people. The digital radio ad has been listened to over 145,000 times. The completion rate, or the number of people who watch/listen to the ad in its entirety, is at 97 percent for the video ads, and 96 percent for the radio ads.

Next steps in this Operation Safe Surfs effort revolve around our upcoming geofencing campaign. We are working to finalize the specific locations and will be welcoming member agency input throughout this process. The installation of safety/suicide prevention signage is also an element of Operation Safe Surfs. Staff is developing a sign design that will accomplish the goals of providing both a rail safety message as well as information on the national suicide prevention hotline. Once the design is finalized, staff will work with the right-of-way owners of the identified strike hot spots to determine the installation locations.

Figure 2 below summarizes the total officer self-initiated services provided during this quarter, for officers assigned to the Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, and San Diego area. In total, there were 2,559 self-initiated patrols by officers, showing an increase from 2,239 the previous quarter.

Figure 2: Officer Self-Initiated Services

Row Labels	Number of Self-Initiated Patrols
PROPERTY	152
PROPERTY-ROW CHECK	151
PROPERTY-ROW GATE CHECK	1
TACTICAL INTENSE PATROL	2,559
TRAIN BOARDING, PLATFORM INSPECTION	2,310
TRAIN RIDE	249
Grand Total	2,711

Summary

For the first two months of the second quarter of FY 2023-2024, officers focused on high visibility and direct enforcement at Los Angeles Union Station platforms. However, during the final month of this quarter, officers were directed to increase their presence on-board trains. This shift came in response to public requests and information obtained through data analysis, which showed an increase in trespassers and conductor assaults. As a result, there were 249 train rides conducted by Amtrak Police officer on Pacific Surfliner trains this quarter, in comparison with 107 the previous quarter.

Attachment

None.

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