Our Starting Point

The derailment accident on the Fukuchiyama Line

On April 25, 2005, we at the West Japan Railway Company caused the Accident on the Fukuchiyama Line, an extremely serious accident resulting in 106 fatalities and more than 500 injured passengers. We pray for all the victims of the accident and extend our sincerest apologies to their bereaved families. We would also like to express our deepest sympathies and sincerest apologies to the injured passengers and their families.

For the immense anxiety that the accident caused, we offer the deepest apology possible to our customers and those in the local community.

Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/time</th>
<th>Monday, April 25, 2005, approx. 9:18 AM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Between Tsukaguchi Sta. and Amagasaki Sta. on the Fukuchiyama Line</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approx.</td>
<td>1,806 m before Amagasaki Sta. (Amagasaki city, Hyogo prefecture)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trains involved</td>
<td>Rapid train from Takakazuka Sta. bound for Doshihamae Sta.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Train No.</td>
<td>5418M (EMU 207 series, 7 cars)</td>
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Summary

Between Tsukaguchi station and Amagasaki station, train no. 5418M entered a rightward curve with a radius of 304 m at 116 km/h—greatly exceeding the speed limit of 70 km/h for the curve. As a result, the front five train cars derailed, causing the first and second cars to collide with an apartment building on the left side of the direction of travel. On the derailment, 106 passengers and the train driver were killed. Furthermore, 562 passengers and 1 pedestrian walking near the scene were injured.

Cause of the accident

It is considered highly probable that the train driver's delay in applying the brake resulted in the entry of the train into a 304 m-radius rightward curved track at a speed of approximately 116 km/h, which was far higher than the specified speed limit of 70 km/h, and the running of the train along the curve at the high speed caused the first car of the train to fall left and derail, which caused the second to fifth cars to derail. It is considered probable that the train driver's delay in applying the brake is attributable to the diversion of his attention from driving the train to (1) listening to the dialogue between the conductor and the train dispatcher by radio communication which was caused by his belief that he had been hung up on by the conductor while he had been talking to the conductor on the intercom to ask him to make a false report and (2) making an excuse to avoid being put on an “off-the-train” re-training course.

Inadequacies in the system for identifying and addressing risks

As a company engaged in the railway business, we need to ensure safety by having each part of the organization earnestly fulfill its duties, while also mutually coordinating with its counterparts. These include management personnel who handle overall supervision and determine the management policies and their requisite safety measures, technical/engineering personnel who design and build the railway systems that put the above policies into action and operational/personal personnel who run the railways, stand on the front lines, and maintain railway system equipment. When implementing management policies in particular, the technical/engineering personnel working at the design stage to first identify and evaluate risks accompanying those policies, then propose safety measures, while the management personnel execute decisions on management policies after confirming that the necessary safety measures have been taken. Then, the operational/personal personnel strive to notice any safety issues after the policies have been implemented (including during day-to-day work tasks), with the management and technical/engineering personnel responding to address any issues.

The planning stage for management policies

A system for preemptively identifying and addressing risks—in order to prevent severe accidents before they occur—was not established at the planning stage of management policies. For instance, at the planning stage for revising the timetable (which establishes the relation between the operation changes to the train line and an accelerated operation schedule) when service began on the JR Total Line policies did not include equipping the line with an ATS system on the curve where the accident occurred.

The decision-making stage for management policies

A system for deciding management policies after confirming that necessary safety measures have been taken was not established. As a result, the confirmation of safety measures and the decision-making process for management policies were undertaken separately, without mutual coordination, including in the case of management policies for changing the formation of the train line and revising the timetable, and safety measures such as equipping the line with an ATS system.

Taking to heart the lessons from the accident

Because JR-West had never predicted an accident of this great magnitude before, we did not have an ATS (Automatic Train Stop) system with speed check functions installed on the curve where the derailment occurred and we did not sufficiently take into account human factors in our employee training and similar programs.

After the accident, in looking back on the issues JR-West needs to rectify, and while implementing various safety initiatives, we came up with the following points of reflection as we reassert why we were unable to prevent the derailment accident on the Fukuchiyama Line:

Company-wide system for ensuring safety

Inadequacies in the system for identifying and addressing risks

As at the Aircraft and Railway Accidents Investigation Commission’s Railway Accident Investigation Report, “It is considered probable that the train driver’s delay in applying the brake is attributable to the diversion of his attention from driving the train to (1) listening to the dialogue between the conductor and the train dispatcher by radio communication which was caused by his belief that he had been hung up on by the conductor while he had been talking to the conductor on the intercom to ask him to make a false report and (2) making an excuse to avoid being put on an “off-the-train” re-training course.

In the background to this were insufficiencies in our employee training program’s consideration of human factors, as well as a lack of resilience from minimal leeway built into the train timetable. At that time, the Company thought that pursuing the individual’s responsibility for an error would prevent recurrence, so we were carrying out disciplinary action and a re-training program that could be perceived as a penalty against personnel. This led to personnel directing their attention toward covering up and making excuses for errors, which resulted in a situation that opened the door to accidents, as opposed to preventing human errors.

The post-implementation stage for management policies

After the implementation of management policies such as changing the formation of the train line, revising the timetable, etc., there were insufficiencies in employees acknowledging safety issues noticed by personnel during their day-to-day work tasks, as well as gathering information on risks that could lead to major accidents.
The particularities of the railway business mean that it is comprised of a variety of technical domains and organized with numerous specialized fields (transportation in general, facilities & equipment, electronics, etc.). This creates fertile ground for a culture prior to top-down communications, including hierarchy within each specialized field and a saltant chain of command. Drawing on lessons learned from when we were a nationalized company, we followed a workplace management approach in which instructions were comprehensively issued at each workplace and an emphasis on punishment and rewards was fundamental. When these were taken to extremes, the corporate culture became focused on pursuing individual liability and the general awareness of sectorialism was heightened. At the same time, top-down communication became excessive and frank discussion was difficult. Dialogue between management, technical, and operational personnel, as well as communication between superiors and subordinates, along with reciprocal coordination between specialized fields and separate workplaces, were all insufficient.

Overconfidence from a successful track record

At JR-West already established its management foundation, we weathered the Great Hanshin Awaji (Kobe) Earthquake disaster, then successfully emerged from full privatization and... A stance of humbly learning from external examples gradually diminished and discrepancies with society at large emerged.

Memorial Grove (Inori no Mori) at the accident site

In September 2005, we held a Memorial Ceremony & Safety Event, which has been followed up with a Memorial Ceremony every year on April 25. After the town-end every year, there have been typically been tributes from general victims bringing flower offerings.

At present, our specially established Supporting Headquarters for the Victims of the Derailment Accident on the Fukuchiyama Line is responding to the needs of those who suffered from the accident. Going forward, we will earnestly listen to the thoughts and opinions of each individual person and continue to make concerted efforts for all persons affected by the accident. Furthermore, we will continue to keep a contact office open in order to be able to consult with and listen to victims into the future.

**Our Starting Point**

**Strategy of Value Creation for Our Vision**

**A Foundation Supporting Value Creation**

**Data**

**Responding to victims**

We incorporated input from victims and drew up a plan in order to construct a Memorial Grove (Inori no Mori) at the site of the Fukuchiyama Line accident in September 2008. The Memorial Grove includes a cenotaph, a Memorial Corner (with letters to the deceased from their loved ones as well as various items donated in their memory), and an Accident Information Corner (with panels giving details about the accident, as well as newspaper clippings, publications, and other related media covering the accident). Anyone may freely visit the Memorial Grove.

The Memorial Grove serves as a place to remember and lay to rest the souls of those who perished, while also leaving a record of the accident for those who come after. The site will keep the accident from being forgotten and will convey the preciousness of life to society and future generations. It will help JR-West reflect on the accident and will act as a physical pledge to on-going safety as the Company continues to carefully and responsibly preserve the site into the future.
The derailment accident on the Fukuchiyama Line

“Think-and-act” initiatives taking to heart the lessons of the accident

With 14 years having passed since the derailment accident on the Fukuchiyama Line, nearly half of current JR-West employees joined the Company after the incident. In order to ensure that the accident is not forgotten, and to implement initiatives for improving safety, the entire JR-West Group is carrying out measures to hold in our hearts the lessons of that day.

Since its inception, the foundation has followed the spirit of its creation by engaging in social and mental care, such as grief counseling for those affected by accidents and disasters, while also engaging in projects for building safer local communities.

As a company entrusted with the precious lives of passengers, we are committed to reflecting on the gravity of causing such a major accident and, as part of creating a society that affords safety and peace of mind, we established the JR-West Relief Foundation in April 2009 (active as a public interest incorporated foundation since January 2010). Since its inception, the foundation has followed the spirit of its creation by engaging in social and mental care, such as grief counseling for those affected by accidents and disasters, while also engaging in projects for building safer local communities.

Employee thoughts

Improving safety awareness by “creating a workplace more conducive to speaking out”

We think that part of the background to the derailment accident on the Fukuchiyama Line was an atmosphere in which it was difficult to report to supervisors and co-workers mistakes that occurred during operations and risks that were noticed. Hence, we are striving to create a workplace more conducive to speaking out.

Specifically, we have reassessed report forms in order to make it easier to report hazards noticed during train operation and have we have meetings that allow employees who have noticed errors or points of concern to explain their issues in their own words. This information is posted on a bulletin board and shared with the entire workforce.

We feel that a mindset is becoming more entrenched where drivers reflect on their day of work and report things they have noticed, while an atmosphere more conducive to making reports is spreading at the workplace. The objective of these initiatives is to prevent errors. We believe that our mission is to translate reported information into countermeasures, while being able to laterally deploy those measures across the workplace.

As drivers on the Fukuchiyama Line, every time we pass by the site where the accident occurred, we feel a strong conviction that a similar derailment accident must never be allowed to happen again. Also, in order to utilize the lessons of the accident across the entire workplace, and to communicate those lessons to junior colleagues, we strive to create a culture that makes safety the highest priority, because that is something we are especially equipped to do.

Improving the quality of work by enhancing communication between specialized divisions

We are in charge of inspecting railway bridges across railway lines in the Yamaguchi area. Our technicians range from those engaged in civil engineering, track maintenance, electricity, as well as other diverse areas, and we work under various conditions inspecting each section. Consequently, the work constantly comes with risks of occupational hazards, such as collisions with trains, electrocution, falls, etc. In order to confront these risks, we must, from the planning stages, mutually share and address issues in each line of work and go about our business with coordination by all parties concerned. We were especially nervous about collisions and electrocution during training before our first inspections at stations were multiple train lines intersect. Because of that, we were careful to regularly and repeatedly check in with all of the relevant parties on site in order to identify risks.

Meticulously speaking face to face and reviewing situations with others helped create an atmosphere conducive to open discussion and the active exchange of opinions. As a result, we were able to take necessary precautions, approach our work with a sense of security for all those involved, and perform higher quality inspections.

Protecting the lives of employees helps in protecting the lives of passengers. Going forward, we will continue to engage in uncompromising daily tasks so that everyone around us can enjoy peace of mind.

Electronic bulletin board

We have designated the 25th day of every month “safety day.” In addition to having study sessions and cross-departmental discussions on safety at each workplace, we hold “think-and-act” safety training at the Railway Safety Education Center and Memorial Grove (Inori no Mori) at the accident site for the purpose of acknowledging the lessons and points of reflection from the accident, using those insights in safety improvement initiatives, and connecting this to the work tasks of each employee.

Furthermore, we are following “think-and-act initiatives” in each employee’s daily work in order to build a culture where safety is of the highest priority. This includes striving to enhance communication and reciprocal coordination among workplaces, as well as endeavoring to establish an environment where it is easy to report information related to safety.

Initiatives that take into account the accident and work to benefit local communities

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Hiroshi Shima
Representative of JR-West Relief Foundation

Pocosimama is a group of those who have experienced miscarriage or stillbirth. Our purpose is to engage in activities that support mothers coping with the profound sadness of losing a young child and we also serve as a community offering mutual support for family members coping with the same heartache. Using the grant from the JR-West Relief Foundation, the Kansai Branch of Pocosimama has been able to provide education and establish a solid groundwork for spreading information, holding peer support gatherings, and offering support for women who would like to become pregnant again. This year, we have been able to offer the Pocos Café, which is a safe place for sharing experiences of loss, shedding tears among companions who understand feelings held for a lost child, and grasping some sense of encouragement. Also this year, we have received medical research and training. Empathy from those who have had similar experiences, and participation in our activities, helps people to find the spirit to carry on, which is why we will continue our initiatives into the future.

Comments from the organizer

Toward creating a society that affords safety and peace of mind, the foundation offers grants to groups and research projects supporting preparations and recovery care for accidents, natural disasters, and unforeseen tragedies, with a special category created covering support projects for areas and individuals affected by the Heavy Rain Event of July 2018. Furthermore, in order to help the spira-roads promotion of emergency aid and support training in local regions, the foundation subsidizes AED training devices and also supports a group whose achievements include providing Inochi no Denwa (a suicide prevention line serving the six prefectures of the Kinki area).

Activities related to mental and physical care for those afflicted by accidents and disasters have given me a poignant sense of how many people there are in the world who are trying to do their best, as well as how many individuals there are concerned about the struggles of life.

At the same time, as the foundation pursues each of our projects, I have felt great meaningfulness from the voices of gratitude coming from grant recipients and seminar participants. Going forward, I would like to cherish these connections, keep the spirit of the foundation at the heart of our thoughts and actions, and continue activities that are beneficial to communities.