

Building safe and reliable railways that offer peace of mind

—Enhancing safety, with the derailment accident on the Fukuchiyama Line as the starting point

The derailment accident on the Fukuchiyama Line

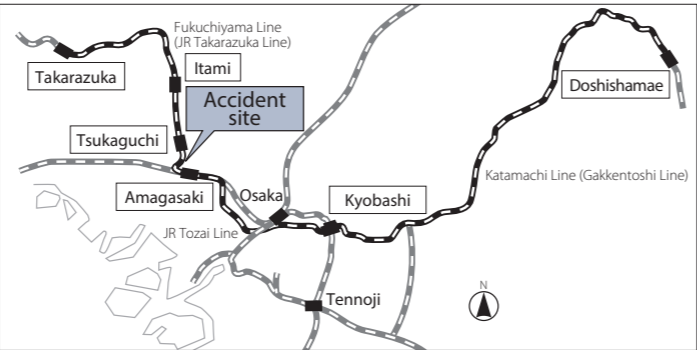
On April 25, 2005, issues at the West Japan Railway Company resulted in an accident on the Fukuchiyama Line, an extremely serious accident resulting in 106 fatalities and more than 500 injured passengers. We pray for all the victims of the accident and would like to express our sincerest apologies to 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.

We will continue to make concerted efforts for all persons affected by the accident, while striving to further enhance safety measures and reform our corporate culture.

Overview

Date/time	Monday, April 25, 2005, approx. 9:18 AM Weather conditions: sunny
Location	Between Tsukaguchi Sta. and Amagasaki Sta. on the Fukuchiyama Line Approx. 1,805 m before Amagasaki Sta. (Amagasaki city, Hyogo prefecture)
Trains involved	Rapid train from Takarazuka Sta. bound for Doshishamae Sta. Train No. 5418M (EMU 207 series, 7 cars)



Summary Between Tsukaguchi station and Amagasaki station, train No. 5418M entered a rightward curve with a radius of 304 m at approximately 116 km/h—greatly exceeding the speed limit of 70 km/h for the corner. As a result, the first through fifth train cars derailed, causing the first and second cars to collide with an apartment building on the left side of the direction the train was traveling. In this 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 From the Railway Accident Investigation Report issued by the Aircraft and Railway Accidents Investigation Commission (now the Japan Transport Safety Board)

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 curved track 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 up an excuse to avoid being put on an “off-the-train” re-training course.

It is considered probable that the West Japan Railway Company’s train driver management system in which drivers who caused an incident or a mistake are put on an “off-the-train” re-training course that can be considered as a penalty or are subjected to a disciplinary action and drivers who did not report an incident or a mistake they had caused or made a false report about such an incident or mistake are put on an even harder “off-the-train” re-training course or subjected to an even harder disciplinary action may have (1) caused the driver to make the call to the conductor on the intercom to ask him to make a false report and (2) caused the diversion of the driver’s attention from driving the train.

Continuing reflection and passing on the lessons of the accident

No matter how much time has elapsed since the accident, and no matter how many generations pass, we must never let it be forgotten, instead making the derailment accident on the Fukuchiyama Line the starting point for all of our safety initiatives. Looking to the future, to ensure that we pass on the serious reflections and lessons that this accident has taught us, we have

reviewed the problems that were present in our corporate culture and safety management at the time and formulated “Achieving Railway Safety into the Future,” which outlines what we should hand on as a compass for safety in the future. This was announced in March 2021.

Points to reflect on, and their background

At the time of the accident, JR-West had not put in place systems to identify and deal with risks when planning and implementing management policies, and we did not have an ATS (Automatic Train Stop) system with speed check functions installed on the curve where the derailment occurred. Moreover, our understanding of human factors was insufficient, and we had reeducation measures in place that were seen as being punitive. Further, there were problems within our organization, including stagnating technical capabilities

and a decreasing awareness of safety, excessive top-down communications, and overconfidence due to our previous successes.

As this shows, at the time of the accident, there were a slew of issues in every aspect of our safety management, and we had been unable to build a company-wide framework for ensuring safety and establish a corporate culture in which safety is the highest priority. We deeply reflect our failure to fulfill our responsibilities as a company entrusted with the lives of our passengers.

Reflections on the derailment accident on the Fukuchiyama Line
We had been unable to build a company-wide framework for ensuring safety and establish a corporate culture in which safety is the highest priority. In other words, we did not fulfill our responsibility as a company entrusted with the precious lives of passengers.
Major background factors to reflect on (Problems rooted in the organization)
How to address safety and ensure it in an organizational context <ul style="list-style-type: none">● We had not based our thinking on the idea that risk is inherent to operating a railway, and thus efforts must be made to prevent possible accidents with serious consequences, regardless of the laws and regulations.● Because of strongly embedded perceptions that specialist divisions should be responsible for their own activities, management was not prepared to work together with the entire organization to make safety a top priority.
Dealing with employees who stand at the forefront of safety <ul style="list-style-type: none">● We were not working from the concept that any person may make a mistake, which led to the spread of idealistic instruction that had the potential to be perceived as punitive.● Front-line employees were under the expectation that they should do what they had been told, exactly as they had been told, and as an organization JR-West had not yet matured to a level that allowed the opinions of its employees to be heard, recognized the personalities and independence of each person in the company, and improved the safety and quality of service through proactive effort.
Attitude toward society and overconfidence and excessive pride in railway operations <ul style="list-style-type: none">● We had grown overconfident and excessively proud of our operations, and we lacked the humility to learn from outside our own organization.

Learning from the lessons of the accident

In order to continue to operate safe railways in the future, we must create a company-wide framework for ensuring safety and leverage that framework to encourage safety “think-and-act” by each individual.

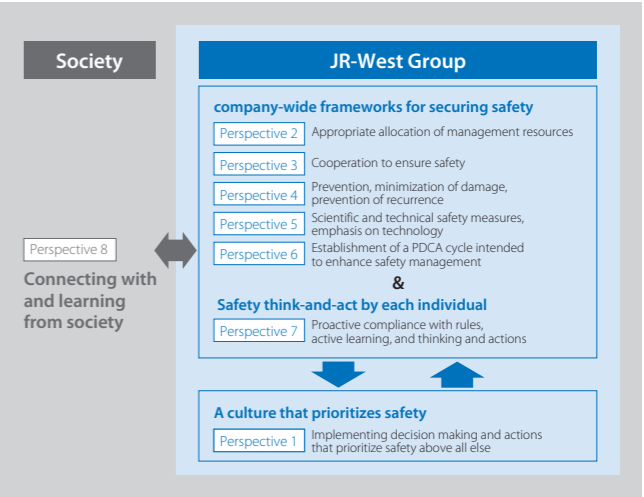
These activities will give rise to a culture in which safety is the highest priority, leading to the construction and improvement of systems and increased safety-oriented thinking and action by all individuals. Repeating this cycle will allow continuous improvements to safety.

In addition to promoting safety initiatives within the company, we will work to connect with and learn from society while gaining the cooperation of our customers and society at large, thus further improving railway safety.

Steps going forward

We will periodically check the direction of our safety initiatives, which are based on the “Essential perspectives in achieving safety” that we have defined as lessons from the accident, and periodically evaluate their effectiveness as we work to achieve improvements.

Essential perspectives in achieving safety



Moreover, we will leverage these perspectives to ensure that each of our employees understands the purpose and background of the safety initiatives and is aware of the role they have to play in putting them into action.

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Memorial Grove (Inori no Mori) at the accident site

We incorporated input from victims and moved forward with a plan to construct a Memorial Grove (Inori no Mori) at the site of the Fukuchiyama Line accident in September 2018.

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 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 ongoing safety as the Company continues to carefully and responsibly preserve the site for all future generations.



Efforts to keep the accident in mind and think and act accordingly

Based on our strong determination to prevent an accident such as that on the Fukuchiyama Line from ever occurring again, we conduct training and other initiatives to increase the awareness of each employee regarding safety. This will ensure that we do not forget this accident and allow us to put the lessons learned from it into practice in our daily work. Going forward, our employees and those of our Group companies will continue to visit Memorial Grove at the site of the accident of their own volition, where they will renew our pledge for safety.

Achieving unchanging determination
Hamada Railway Department, Yonago Branch

The very first clause in our local workplace policy is to work toward enhancing safety, with the derailment accident on the Fukuchiyama Line as our starting point. However, due to the effect of the novel coronavirus, in recent years we have had to refrain from visiting Memorial Grove. To ensure that the coronavirus pandemic does not curtail our opportunities to grapple with the derailment accident on the Fukuchiyama Line and thus halt our progress toward improving safety, we connect with Memorial Grove remotely each month to renew our awareness of its significance and of the vestiges of the accident. These moments also provide an opportunity for our employments to remember the seriousness of this tragedy and to reconsider its bearing on their daily work.

Employees from throughout the company, including station staff, railway crew, and employees in our rolling stock, facilities, and electrical installations, share their thoughts on the accident in an initiative that helps to instill an awareness of safety as the top priority for the entire railway department. Additionally, we compile the responses of employees who have undergone this as “Unchanging determination,” which we distribute to every office on the branch, which will ensure that we do not forget the accident.



Every employee creates our corporate culture
Miyuki Sasaki
Train Center, Suita Depot, Kansai Urban Area Regional Head Office

When I saw the names inscribed on the monument at Memorial Grove, I was reminded of the lives of the people who died, and I thought of their families and had to fight back tears.

The phrase “corporate culture” came up during our reflections on the accident. I think that we must always be aware that it is we who create our own corporate culture, and I hope that we can create a corporate in which safety is the highest priority.

In our assessments of the risks in our workplace, we will refrain from being overconfident with regard to safety, instead taking a step back to offer hypotheses on risks from a variety of angles and discuss them with our colleagues as we work to improve the awareness of safety throughout the workplace.



Passing on the lessons to our successors
Yuki Kaneda
Transportation Section, Fukuchiyama Branch

Our efforts at Memorial Grove allowed me to convey the situation and my thoughts at the time to employees who joined the company after the accident. Although at the time I believed that I was safety conscious, I did wonder if the means hadn’t simply become the end. This initiative has caused me to reflect more deeply on our efforts to date directed toward safety and on our employees’ awareness in this regard.

For younger employees, the change in awareness in thinking about safety is not actually a change as such, and thus those of us who learned the lessons of the accident first-hand must communicate its importance in full. I myself was present in the midst of this transition, which is why I want to go beyond stories of how things used to be to convey why our current safety measures are important, and communicate to the lessons of the accident in a systematic manner.



Responding to victims

At present, our specially established Supporting Headquarters for the Victims of the Derailment Accident on the Fukuchiyama Line is taking the lead in 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.

Memorial ceremony	In September 2005, we held a Memorial Ceremony & Safety Event, which has been followed up with a Memorial Ceremony every year on April 25. Due the spread of the novel coronavirus, in 2020 and 2021 we have offered flowers at the Memorial Grove at the site of the Fukuchiyama Line accident, together with our apologies and condolences.
Explanation meetings	Every year we hold explanation meetings at which the company president and other associated executives inform accident victims directly of our improvements to safety and initiatives we have taken to address issues, as well as receiving input from them.



Initiatives toward creating a society that affords safety and peace of mind

As a company entrusted with the precious lives of passengers, we are committed to reflecting on the gravity of allowing such a major accident to occur and, as part of creating a society that affords safety and peace of mind, we established the JR-West Relief Foundation in April 2009. The foundation has followed the

spirit of its creation by engaging in projects that provide physical and mental care to those affected by accidents and disasters, while also engaging in projects for building safer local communities.

Hosting events	The foundation holds Life Seminars presented by guest speakers from various fields, which focus on life from multiple perspectives and strive to provide participants with the opportunity for personal reflection. As an event marking its tenth anniversary, the organization now holds an annual essay contest for elementary and junior high school students, on the topic of “life,” and shares the best submissions with the community.
Offering grants	The foundation offers grants to support groups and research projects working on preparations and recovery care for accidents, natural disasters, and unforeseen tragedies, in an effort to create a society that affords safety and peace of mind. Furthermore, in order to help promote emergency aid/life support training in local communities the foundation subsidizes AED training devices and also supports a group whose achievements include providing Inochi no Denwa (a suicide prevention line servicing the six prefectures of the Kansai area).



An online “Life seminar”



Staff training at a grant recipient’s site



Essay contest booklet