



BACKGROUNDER

The mission of Amtrak, the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, is “to deliver intercity transportation with superior safety, customer service and financial excellence. To accomplish this mission, Amtrak has identified three overarching strategic themes: safety and security, customer focus and financial excellence.”

Amtrak is a federally chartered corporation and the federal government is the majority stockholder. The board of directors is appointed by the president of the United States and confirmed by the U.S. Senate. Amtrak is operated as a for-profit company, rather than a public authority.

The U.S. Congress created Amtrak in 1970 through by passing the Rail Passenger Service Act of 1970. Amtrak was created to take over operations that had previously been handled by private railroad companies. Amtrak’s services began on May 1, 1971, serving 43 states with 21 routes.

In the 1980s, the high-speed Washington-to-New York Metroliner Service was updated with new equipment and faster schedules. In the 1990s, California obtained additional state-supported trains and routes and new bi-level passenger cars.

At the beginning of the 2000s, the first Acela Express high-speed train operated between Washington and Boston. The Acela Express traveled at speeds up to 150 mph. Following the success of the Acela Express, the Metroliner Service concluded its operation in 2006 after 37 years.

Today, Amtrak has approximately 21,000 route miles in 46 states, Washington D.C. and three Canadian provinces. Amtrak operates more than 300



trains a day, carrying passengers to more than 500 destinations. Amtrak is the top pick for state-supported corridor services in 15 states and four commuter rail agencies.

Amtrak is dedicated to the highest level of safety for passengers and employees. The Amtrak Police Department has security measures in place to ensure the safety of passengers and employees. Amtrak Police Department's uniformed police officers, Special Operations units, the random passenger and carry-on baggage screening and inspections, K-9 units, checked baggage screening and on-board ID checks are measures taken to ensure safety. Passengers who do not consent to security procedures will not be allowed to board the train and a refund will be offered to the passenger. Passengers must provide photo ID to ticket agents when purchasing tickets. Amtrak has put additional passenger identification procedures in place, such as a random ticket verification process, due to a 2004 Security Directive from the U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA). Carry-on bags must be tagged with the name and address of the passenger.

The Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 requires the installment of Positive Train Control (PTC) on many of the rail routes that Amtrak trains travel on. The deadline for installment of PTC is December 31, 2015, and Amtrak has been working with perseverance to install these systems on their tracks. Amtrak anticipates that the deadline will be met for the majority of the tracks. However, much of the 21,000-mile network is owned by other railroads. Amtrak operates their trains over these host railroads. These railroads hold the responsibility of installment of PTC on their tracks. Once PTC is installed and certified by the Federal Railroad Administration



(FRA), Amtrak crews will be trained to operate over each of the host railroad routes. Congress has considered extending the December 31, 2015, deadline due to freight railroads stating possible suspension of service because of the current deadline for installment of PTC. Amtrak is working with the FRA, host railroads and commuter operators to accommodate customers who have reservations on the routes that may be affected in 2016.

Amtrak does not charge extra fees. Amtrak will quote and price the travel fare at the lowest fare available when the passenger makes the reservation. Amtrak has special discounts for children, seniors, American Automobile Association (AAA) cardholders, active duty U.S. military personnel and their spouses and dependents, veterans, students, large groups, disabled passengers and National Association of Railroad Passengers members.



Op-Ed: Amtrak Proves They Have Crisis Management Skills

By Kathryn Wood

On May 12, 2015, Amtrak's Northeast Regional Train 188 derailed as it sped around a curve at Frankford Junction in Port Richmond, Philadelphia. The horrific incident has been called "one of the worst railroad accidents in Philadelphia history." Brandon Bostian is the 32-year-old Amtrak engineer who was driving Train 188 at the time of the crash.

Investigations to discover the cause of the crash are being led by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). Since these investigations are ongoing, Amtrak made the right decision to put Bostian on unpaid leave. According to investigators, Bostian was not texting, emailing or talking on the phone. Toxicology reports show Bostian was not using drugs or alcohol at the time of the crash. What could have caused the crash? Bostian was driving the train around a curve at 106 mph, which is more than double the speed limit for driving around curves. He frantically tried to slow down as he approached the curve, but it was too late. The train crashed and left eight passengers dead and more than 200 passengers injured.

Amtrak President and CEO Joe Boardman provided a very timely and well-thought out response to the tragedy, which was released as a statement on the Amtrak blog on May 13, 2015, the day after the horrific crash. In the statement, Boardman said "Amtrak takes full responsibility and deeply apologizes for our role in this tragic event."

By taking responsibility for the tragedy so quickly, Boardman undoubtedly gained the respect of many readers. Boardman expresses his gratitude to first responders in Philadelphia who worked in the "dark of night" to help ease the pain



of those involved in the crash. Boardman stresses that Amtrak still anticipates to be finished with Positive Train Control, a safety measure mandated by a congressional bill, by the December 2015 deadline.

Amtrak did everything in their power to assist passengers, crewmembers, and their families after the crash. Amtrak responded to the accident with every resource that they had available. Within 24 hours of the crash, Amtrak set up a family assistance center in Philadelphia “to work closely with the family of passengers and crew on the train.” Amtrak also worked with the individuals and families effected by the crash to help them with transportation, lodging, medical bills and funeral expenses.

Amtrak continues to work diligently on Positive Train Control (PTC). They fully anticipate to complete the work required for the track that they are responsible for in time for the December 2015 deadline. These actions show Amtrak’s dedication to safety and their customers.



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