

Ontario Northland

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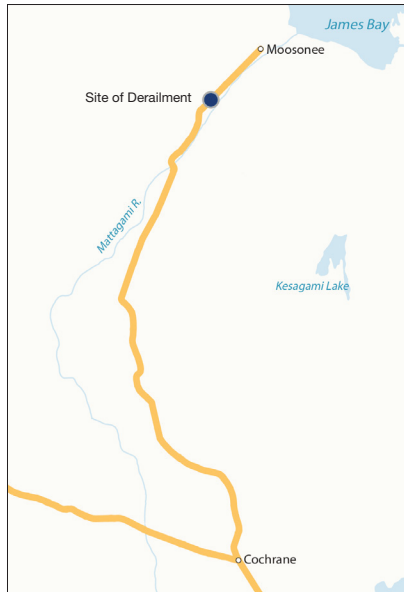
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For over 100 years Ontario Northland has been transporting people and goods from Moosonee to Cochrane. Providing vital transportation to the James Bay Coast is a responsibility we take seriously and fosters a great amount of pride throughout the organization.

By sharing this information we aim to maintain trust with our passengers, freight customers, and the First Nations communities we serve.



Summary of Events

At approximately 5:42 p.m. on Wednesday May 30th, 2018, Ontario Northland's Polar Bear Express passenger train derailed 23 miles (37 kilometres) south of Moosonee. The train consisted of two locomotives and 12 rail cars, and was carrying 73 passengers and 7 crew members.

42 minutes into the trip, the train derailed after an emergency brake application was initiated. A total of seven cars derailed.

The derailed equipment included three coaches and a dining car which were tilted at a 45 degree angle. All passengers and crew safely evacuated the cars.

There were no apparent serious injuries, spills or environmental damage. 429 feet of track was damaged.

Weather at the time of the accident was clear and extremely hot with Moosonee reporting a temperature of 33.6° Celsius. This represented a significant temperature swing of over 36° Celsius from the low of -3.3° Celsius reported just the day prior.

Emergency Response

Ontario Northland's Polar Bear Express Emergency Response Plan was enacted immediately. External emergency response agencies were notified and a rescue train was ordered out of Cochrane. Three rail vehicles that were available in Moosonee were put into service shuttling passengers from the derailment site to Moosonee.

First Responders in Moosonee were transported to the site, they also met passengers as they arrived to the Moosonee Station. The community's and the company's response was professional, speedy and compassionate.

Plans for rerailling the equipment commenced immediately after the evacuation of all passengers was complete. Ontario Northland is the only all season land link connecting Moosonee and Cochrane transporting passengers, food, building materials, medical supplies and equipment. Restoring service quickly was a priority.

The Polar Bear Express passenger train operates five days a week from Monday to Friday. Due to the incident train service was cancelled on Thursday May 31st and Friday June 1st and by 8:50 p.m. on Friday June 1st all cars had been rerailed. Track work commenced the following morning and regular train service recommenced on Monday June 4th.

Some passengers had urgent travel requirements, therefore alternate charter air services were arranged on the days train service was not available.

All key stakeholders including community leaders and First Nation leaders were contacted within one hour of the accident and were kept apprised throughout the response.

Investigation

Ontario Northland commenced an investigation immediately following the incident. This investigation consisted of measuring, documenting and photographing all evidence, gathering all pertinent track and equipment data, performing an analysis of the locomotive event recorder download, and interviewing the employees directly involved including the operating crew and track maintenance personnel.

The investigation identified the direct cause of the derailment to be human error by the operating crew unintentionally failing to comply with a speed restriction.

The investigation also identified several recommendations to avoid a similar incident in the future.

Ontario Northland will not be commenting further as the derailment is the subject of legal action against the corporation.

Action as a Result of the Investigation

- All recommended actions that were identified in the investigation have been acted upon and most are now complete.
- Post incident debriefs have been conducted both internally and externally with outside emergency response agencies.
- Ontario Northland has collected data and recommendations for the Polar Bear Express Emergency Response Plan, and put in place new procedures to incorporate lessons learned.
- Emergency preparedness on the train has been enhanced by carrying additional winter emergency equipment and specialized devices to assist with evacuation.

Other Information

- While Ontario Northland Railway is not federally regulated, it inspects and maintains its track in accordance with Transport Canada requirements. In fact, Ontario Northland exceeds the Transport Canada requirements for both electronic track geometry testing as well as rail flaw detection testing.
- In 2017, Ontario Northland commenced a significant 10 year upgrade program on the Island Falls Subdivision which includes investments in heavier rail, tie replacements, track surfacing programs, and bridge rehabilitations. The first two years of this program are now complete with capital expenditures of over \$9 million in each year. This program has essentially doubled the annual quantity of rail and ties installed in the subdivision over previous levels. Ontario Northland has had a remarkable safety record on the Island Falls Subdivision with only one significant safety occurrence in over thirty five years.