

Automatic control system eyed in US metro crash

1 day ago

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The US transportation safety board has urged Washington Metro officials to upgrade remote train controls as investigators eyed the current system as the possible cause of last month's deadly subway train crash.

In an urgent safety recommendation issued Monday, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) urged the operators of the Washington Metro to develop software and circuitry that would continuously evaluate where trains are on the tracks and alert operations personnel when problems are detected.

An ongoing probe into the June 23 collision between two Metro trains in the US capital has found that the automatic control system failed not only to detect a stopped train but also to alert the driver of another Metro that the stationary train was ahead on the track, the NTSB said.

The moving train ploughed into the back of the stopped train, killing nine people and injuring dozens in the worst accident in the Washington Metro's 33-year history.

All the fatalities were in the striking train, including the driver who the probe has shown braked heavily before impact.

The current train control system used by the Washington Metro was designed by US company General Railway Signal, a spokesman for Metro told AFP.

Earlier probe results have shown that a circuit -- an element that sends speed commands to trains and tell them when to stop or proceed -- on the track where the accident occurred "lost detection" of the stopped train.

The circuit had been malfunctioning intermittently, both before and after it was upgraded just days before the accident, the NTSB said on Monday.

Investigators have also found there was no communication between the train operators and the Metro operations control center before the crash.

Nor was there a system in place to alert the control center if the automatic control system stops detecting a train, the NTSB said.

Metro said in a statement that there are "currently no systems available commercially that could provide the Metro system with the kind of alerts that the NTSB has recommended."

Copyright © 2009 AFP. All rights reserved. [More »](#)

[Are you socially anxious?](#)

Do social or performance situations make you overly worried?

www.BostonSocialAnxiety.com

[Center for Anxiety](#)

Adolescent Panic Disorder Treatment

(617) 353-9610

www.bu.edu/teenpanic/

[Prepare to be Shocked](#)

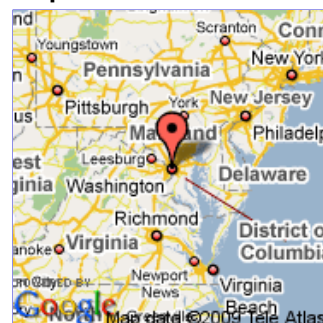
Millions have already taken this amazing test. What's your RealAge?


www.RealAge.com



Investigators work at the site where two Metrorail trains collided with one another

Map



 Add News to your Google Homepage