Railway collision injures 2

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Railway Collision Injures 2, Derails 5 Engines, 22 Cars

By D.J. Swanson

VAUGHN — Santa Fe Railway crews and federal railroad officials are en route to Vaughn to begin the investigation of a railroad collision that injured two of nine workers aboard two Santa Fe freight trains Wednesday morning.

The accident apparently occurred as one of the freight trains was being moved onto a siding to allow the other train to pass.

Five locomotives on the eastbound train and 22 cars of the westbound freight were derailed about 11 miles southeast of Vaughn.

State Police Sergeant Jim Hiltsey of Santa Rosa said the accident occurred about 8:10 a.m.

Hiltsey said a brakeman and a fireman aboard one of the trains suffered minor injuries.

Although Hiltsey said one of the workers was taken to De Baca General Hospital in Ft. Sumner, hospital personnel refused to release the name or home town of the injured man.

The victim was treated and released Wednesday afternoon.

Vaughn volunteer ambulance crew members also would not confirm any information about a patient they transported to Ft. Sumner.

Hiltsey said the accident was apparently caused when the westbound train carrying 48 cars was parked on a siding to allow the eastbound train, with 58 cars, to pass.

R.P. Benson, superintendent for Santa Fe's New Mexico division, said pulse recorders on the locomotives will be analyzed today in San Antonio, Texas. He said the recorders will determine the speeds of the trains. One estimate, he said, was 15 mph.

Railway crews from Clovis were working Wednesday evening to right the one tipped-over engine and pull the other four derailed engines back onto the track. Several container cars were also being put back on the tracks.

The accident forced the line to be closed and trains were being rerouted over Southern Pacific track, according to Susan Metcalf, a Santa Fe spokeswoman in Chicago. Work crews either were at the scene or were en route to clear the track and make repairs.

The traffic control system that directs trains passing through the area also received major damage and would have to be repaired, she said.

The accident occurred at Joffre, a siding southeast of Vaughn, where there are two tracks in place.