



# National Transportation Safety Board

## Railroad Accident Brief

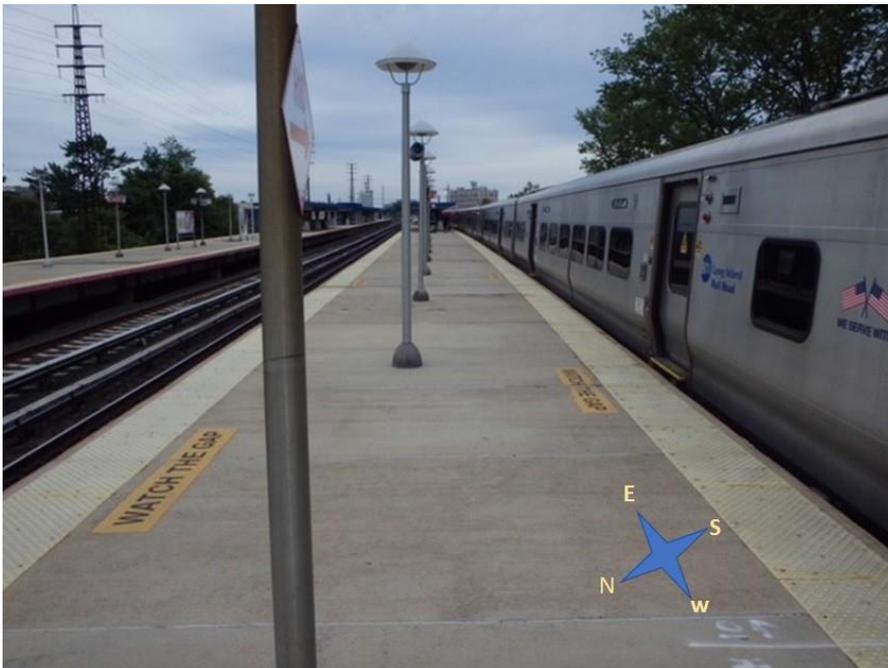
### Passenger Fatality on the Long Island Rail Road

#### Lynbrook, New York

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## The Accident

On April 5, 2018, about 8:00 p.m. eastern daylight time, a passenger who was walking eastward on the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) Lynbrook Station platform came into contact with the side of LIRR train 884. Subsequently, the passenger contacted the side of the train and was dragged and killed by the train as it was leaving the station.<sup>1</sup> (See figure 1.) The accident happened in Lynbrook, New York, on the LIRR Long Beach Branch. At the time of the accident, it was dark, the sky was clear, the wind was from the south at 19 mph, and the temperature was 42°F.



**Figure 1.** Lynbrook Station with exemplar LIRR train.

Train 884 entered the Lynbrook Station about 8:00 p.m. and departed about 1 minute later after some passengers disembarked and other passengers boarded. The LIRR operating rules required crewmembers to ensure that all people are clear of the train and doors before closing the doors and moving the train.

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<sup>1</sup> (a) All times in this report are eastern daylight time; (b) Lynbrook is a village in Nassau County, New York.

## **Investigative Factors**

**Railroad Operations.** LIRR train crew actions were governed by LIRR operating rules, train schedule, timetable instructions and Centralized Control System (signal indications) which governed train movements arriving and departing Lynbrook Station. The involved train crew was found to be in compliance with all applicable rules and instructions.

**Train Number 884.** The crew of train 884 consisted of a locomotive engineer, a conductor, and an assistant conductor. The train consisted of ten multiple unit passenger cars powered by an outside third rail. The train crew went on duty on April 5, 2018, at Hempstead, New York. Prior to the train's departure from Penn Station, New York, the engineer performed all required safety checks and reported that the train's brakes operated as intended. The train originated at Penn Station, New York, with a destination of Long Beach, New York. In route, the train departed Valley Stream, New York (the last station before Lynbrook) on schedule at 8:06 p.m. The LIRR operating rules require crew members to make sure that all people are clear of the train and doors before closing the doors and moving the train.

According to video platform recordings and crewmember interviews, immediately before the train doors closed and departed the station, the conductor was in the third car of the train looking out of the window (back along the station platform) and the assistant conductor was on the station platform near the seventh car. The assistant conductor signaled to the conductor with a flashlight that all passengers were clear of the train prior to the train departing. The conductor acknowledged the signal, closed the train doors, and signaled the engineer to depart the station. After the train began moving, the conductor said that he saw a person move toward the train, about halfway down the platform near the waiting room. The conductor said that the person made contact with the fifth or sixth car of the train and either held onto or was dragged along the platform by the train. The conductor immediately called the engineer over the intercom and told him to stop the train; the conductor also signaled the engineer to stop the train. After the train stopped, the conductor and assistant conductor got off the train and discovered the deceased person on the platform about one car-length from the east end of the station. The Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) police department responded to the scene, because the LIRR is a subsidiary of the MTA. The on-scene investigation by the MTA police department found no evidence of criminal activity related to the accident.

## **Passenger Actions**

The Lynbrook station platform is equipped with video cameras. Both the NTSB and the MTA police department reviewed video recordings of the accident. The videos showed that the passenger was walking down the platform, reached out to touch the moving train, then leaned into the moving train.

## **Passenger Fatality on the Long Island Rail Road**

### **Medical Review and Toxicology**

An autopsy was performed by local authorities.<sup>2</sup> The deceased individual had a high level of alcohol in his blood that likely impacted his judgement.

### **Probable Cause**

The National Transportation Safety Board determines that the probable cause of the accident was the failure of the passenger to recognize that the departing train was moving as he walked on the station platform. Contributing to the cause of the accident was the high level of alcohol in the passenger at the time of the accident.

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<sup>2</sup> Toxicology testing conducted as part of the autopsy by the medical examiner's laboratory detected ethyl alcohol at 0.23g/ml percent in blood and 0.24g/ml percent in vitreous.

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For more details about this accident, visit [www.nts.gov/investigations/dms.html](http://www.nts.gov/investigations/dms.html) and search for NTSB accident identification RRD18LR005.

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The NTSB has authority to investigate and establish the facts, circumstances, and cause or probable cause of a railroad accident in which there is a fatality or substantial property damage, or that involves a passenger train. (49 U.S. Code § 1131 - General authority)

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties . . . and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person.” 49 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 831.4. Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. 49 United States Code, Section 1154(b).

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