

Amtrak hits car in Camas; mom dies, son hurt

Maria Gonzalez Torres was 34

Amy Frazier and KOIN 6 News Staff Published: May 16, 2017, 11:52 am Updated: May 16, 2017, 6:14 pm



The driver died and another person injured when this car collided with an Amtrak train in Camas, May 16, 2017 (KOIN)

CAMAS, Wash. (KOIN) — A car with 2 people inside ran a stop sign and was hit by an oncoming Amtrak train in Camas, killing a mother and injuring her son.

The Amtrak originated in Chicago on May 14 on its way to Portland. A total of 75 passengers and 5 crew were aboard when the crash happened at a crossing on a private road around SW 6th and Viola that is marked with stop signs on both sides.

The car ran a stop sign. Camas Police Officer Debrah Riedl said the train tried to stop but couldn't avoid hitting the car.

Maria G. Gonzalez Torres, 34, died at the scene. Her 14-year-old son was taken to PeaceHealth Southwest Medical Center for treatment. Riedl said the youth was able to walk and talk.

A passenger on the train, Melissa Madsen, told KOIN 6 News she saw something out the window just before the train stopped.

“I was coming back from Minot, ND. We were inbetween Camas and Vancouver when the incident happened,” she told KOIN 6 News by phone. “I saw something out the window just before the train stopped. There was some debris that flew into the embankment and the train stopped very shortly after.”

She said the train stopped very quickly “but didn’t jar anyone. ... The guy over the intercom said there was a fatality. I saw an ambulance go by. But (the crash scene) is behind us because it took the train a little while to completely stop.”

Madsen said she “felt really bad that someone passed away. That’s awful.

KOIN 6 News learned the maximum speed along the tracks in that area is 70 mph. Investigators are looking to see how fast the train was traveling, if it tried to slow down and if the train tried to alert the driver.

The Clark County Sheriff’s Office is investigating along with officials from both Amtrak and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad.