

> BLET statement on remote control train wreck in Arlington, Texas  
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> <http://www.ble.org/pr/news/newsflash.asp?id=3905>  
> CLEVELAND, March 19 -- Don Hahs, National President of the Brotherhood of  
> Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, issued the following statement today in  
> response to a remote control accident in Arlington, Texas, on March 11.  
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> "On March 19, an article about a remote control train wreck appeared in  
> the Fort Worth Star Telegram.  
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> "An eyewitness told the paper that a Union Pacific remote control  
> locomotive in Arlington, Texas, repeatedly backed up and rammed into an  
> Auto Rack train until it derailed into the path of an oncoming freight  
> train. In the article, a Union Pacific Railroad spokesman stated that the  
> remote control operator was out of position to see the cars he was  
> hitting.  
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> "In the same article, a spokesman for the Union Pacific told the Star  
> Telegram that the railroad 'has not had a single accident where it was the  
> fault of the technology. They would have still happened with a human  
> engineer.'  
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> "I seriously doubt that the accident in Arlington would have happened with  
> a certified locomotive engineer in the cab. No engineer in his right mind  
> would have backed up and repeatedly rammed into a standing cut of cars  
> until it derailed. Nor would this have happened if federal regulations had  
> required head end protection.  
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> "On March 12, an article regarding the safety of remote control  
> locomotives was published in the Toledo Blade newspaper. BLET sources told  
> the paper that point protection is routinely ignored in every day remote  
> control operations. Federal Railroad Administration spokesman Warren  
> Flatau responded by telling the paper that lack of point protection 'is a  
> serious allegation' that will be investigated.  
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> "The incident in Arlington, Texas, proves that the BLET's 'serious  
> allegation' is correct. It is now time for the FRA to step up to the  
> plate. It's time to stop investigating and start regulating.  
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> "Proper point protection is one of the 'recommended guidelines' the FRA  
> issued for remote control operations. It is becoming abundantly clear that  
> railroad companies are regularly ignoring this and other 'recommended

> guidelines.'

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> "The railroad companies are playing a very dangerous game with remote  
> control trains. The Auto Rack train in Arlington could very easily have  
> been a chemical tanker. The oncoming freight train could very easily have  
> been a high-speed passenger train. In short, the remote control wreck in  
> Arlington could very easily have been much, much worse.

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> "Only enforceable federal regulations will put an end to this dangerous  
> game."

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