

Salisbury train crash: Train driver suffers injuries believed to be life-changing

November 1, 2021



British Transport Police has said the driver of one of the trains involved in a collision in Salisbury on Sunday night has suffered injuries “believed to be life-changing”.

At around 6.45pm, a Great Western Railway (GWR) service from Southampton to Cardiff collided with a South Western Railway (SWR) service from London to Honiton as they both entered the Fisherton Tunnel in Salisbury.

Both trains were travelling in the same direction and one train struck the side of the other, causing it to derail whilst in the tunnel. The front few carriages remained upright while the back tipped on their side.

Ninety two passengers were on both train services with around 30 people attending a casualty centre which was set up in a nearby church – the majority of who were walking wounded and assessed at the scene.

Thirteen people were taken to hospital by ambulance where they have received treatment for minor injuries. One remains there.

Unfortunately, the driver of the train was more seriously injured and his injuries are believed to be life-changing. He also remains in hospital in a stable condition this morning, and his family have been informed.

Detective Chief Inspector Paul Langley said: "This will no doubt have been an incredibly frightening experience for all those involved and our thoughts are with them and their families today.

"Specialist officers and detectives remain on scene in Salisbury and we are working closely alongside the Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) and the Office of Rail and Road to establish exactly how these two trains came to collide.

"We are keeping an open mind but at this early stage there has been nothing to suggest the train struck an object or that there was any significant delay between the trains colliding and then one derailing.

"This has been a large scale, multi-agency operation and I would like to pay particular thanks to our emergency service colleagues for their efforts in safely evacuating passengers, and to the many members of the local community who reached out with offers of help."

A joint Network Rail, Great Western Railway and South Western Railway statement following the latest update from the British Transport Police: "While we're thankful the majority of customers and colleagues have now been able to go home safely, unfortunately it has become clear that a driver sustained a more serious injury and continues to be treated in hospital. We know everyone in the railway family is wishing him a full and swift recovery. Our thoughts remain with him, and with all those affected by the incident.

"The relevant authorities are in the very early stages of their investigations, and it is likely the trains will need to remain on site for some time and the line will stay closed for at least a few days.

"Currently, South Western Railway is unable to run any services into or out of Salisbury station. While there is a limited bus replacement service in operation, we advise customers to avoid all but essential travel in the area.

"Great Western Railway will be unable to call at stations between Salisbury and Romsey, where buses will replace trains. Journeys between Cardiff, Bristol, Bath Spa and Portsmouth and Southampton are likely to be quicker via Reading.

"Thank you so much to our colleagues and the emergency services for their support and dedication throughout this incident.

"Please regularly check the SWR and GWR websites for more information on alternative routes and ticket acceptances."

British Transport Police said they had moved out of the rescue phase of the operation and into the investigation on Monday afternoon, which will involve the trains remaining in situ for some time.

The investigation remains at an early stage but a senior detective has been appointed to lead the

enquiries as we work to establish the full circumstances of how this incident came to happen.

In an update on Tuesday (November 2) Martin Frobisher, Network Rail's safety and engineering director, said: "Sunday's accident was incredibly frightening for everyone involved and our thoughts are with everyone injured or affected in any way.

"Initial findings suggest that low adhesion played a key part in causing the collision. It's an issue that affects railways across the world and is something that we, and our train operator colleagues, work hard to combat - so that we can run trains safely and reliably throughout autumn, and why incidents such as the one in Salisbury at the weekend are incredibly rare.

"We will continue to work closely with investigators to understand what happened and what more we can do to help prevent this happening again."

The Rail Accident Investigation Branch said it arrived on site on Sunday night to begin investigation what caused the collision.

In a Tweet it said: "We now have a team of 5 inspectors on site who have begun examining the train, tracks, infrastructure and electronic data to piece together what caused the accident."

An Office of Rail and Road spokesperson said: "ORR safety inspectors are on site this morning, working with the Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) and the British Transport Police to investigate how this incident happened. It is too early to speculate on the cause, and our investigation will work to understand the full circumstances. Our thoughts are with all the passengers that were injured."

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