



Inside THE RAIL

From NASA's Confidential Close Call Reporting System



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DOORS

Throughout history, doors have been portals of choice for opportunity and risk. A door can lead to the safety of a familiar environment or from that environment to the uncertainty of an external world. The men and women of passenger rail service introduce a similar choice to their customers when they operate the train doors. Passengers transition between a familiar interior and an uncertain external world when entering or exiting a train. Responsibility for assuring that passengers get through the doors safely rests squarely with the train crew. On occasion when a train stops, the doors will not align with the platform and they will open to danger. The cause may be a crew-related issue or circumstances beyond the crew's control. One thing is certain: when train doors open, everyone should use caution.

The following C3RS reports show that sometimes, despite the best efforts, doors may open off of the platform.

Not Quite There

A cab signal penalty stopped this train short of both the station and platform and the Assistant Conductor popped the doors open. Reports from three crew members were received on this one event.

From the Assistant Conductor's report:

■ *Before arriving at Station X, an irate passenger was yelling about missing their stop at the previous station. I thought [we were] arriving at Station X and I opened the doors when the train stopped. As I opened the doors, I noticed that the train was not on the platform so I closed the doors and then proceeded to Station X.*

In a callback to the Assistant Conductor, he stated he was new on the job and was dealing with an inebriated, irate passenger. When he felt the train stop moving, he inadvertently opened the doors without visibly confirming the train was spotted correctly on the station platform.

From the Engineer's report:

■ *I had a penalty [brake application] when the cab signals changed. As we came to a stop to reset the penalty, I noticed the end doors and center doors opened according to the display unit. It was dark so I couldn't see what was going on. The doors closed according to the display unit. I contacted my Brakeman and he assured me everything was ok and we could go.*

From the Conductor's report:

■ *While conducting my assignment, we slowed due to instructions received en route to switch tracks and operate*

in a west direction. At that time the doors on the north side opened before we arrived in the station. The doors closed immediately after...

Location, Location, Location

An Assistant Conductor was attempting to collect fares from passengers who appeared to be intoxicated.

■ *While collecting fares, [I] encountered two intoxicated passengers. Those interactions made me lose track of where the train was and what I needed to do. Upon pulling into the station, I was reminded to open the doors. Not realizing which car I was in, and after the encounters with the two passengers, I opened the doors. Once opened, I realized the last two cars were not platformed and I was in the wrong car. As soon as I saw them open, I immediately closed them and walked back to the correct location to properly open the doors.*

New On The Job

An Extra Board Conductor was becoming comfortable after being called to work the same assignment a few days in a row. The shortcut he attempted did not work out as he had hoped.

From the Conductor's report:

■ *Train came to a stop at station. In the job briefing we had, we agreed to pull the head two cars off the platform and I was supposed to cut out the second car, but I did not. I knew that no passengers were exiting those two cars because I was called twice for the same assignment and I knew there were no passengers exiting at the station.*

From the Engineer's report on the same event:

■ *On train, conductor was informed in a job briefing that at [upcoming] station, motor and head two cars would be pulled off, as the [platform] only holds eight cars. He was an Extra Board Conductor, but he was [new] on this job. When the train arrived at the station, I spotted the train in a normal fashion or even a few feet short. The Brakeman opened forward. I was not aware that anything went wrong until the train got to the Terminal. ...The Conductor later said to me that he didn't cut out the doors on the head two cars due to the fact that no one got off there the previous two days.*

Let Me Out of Here

Railroaders are responsible for making the train trip as safe as possible. That is their primary concern; however, sometimes passengers have their own agenda.

■ *At the previous stations, the train was braking well and was coming in very slow. So, coming into the station, I began braking later. The head working coach ended up off the platform and the passengers got off in the gravel. I had warned the train crew over the radio that the car wasn't on the platform, but they opened the doors regardless.*

Under Pressure

The Aviation Safety Reporting System (ASRS) defined a term called "Hurry-Up Syndrome" as any situation where human performance is degraded by a perceived or actual need to hurry or rush tasks or duties for any reason (March 1993, Issue 5, ASRS *Directline*). The following Conductor experienced being rushed as well as communication issues in this event.

■ *We had communication problems with the [station supervision] who was trying to tell us that we were going to Track X behind the [outbound signal]. [Outbound signal is] in the middle of the platform in which we would have cars off of the platform. I received the communication as we hit the platform. This left me no time to go back the required number of cars to toggle off the cars that would be off of the platform. I ran back to get to the doors and was fighting through the passengers to get to the cab to throw the toggle to zone off the affected cars.*

...I told the [crewman] to key open the door in the fourth car to let the passengers out. I went into the cab in the fifth car and put the toggle to off. I opened the cab window and put my key in the panel and saw the train doors open. I looked back and saw that the doors were open at the west end of the platform (at least 2 1/2 cars off of the platform). I yelled to the [crewman] to close the doors as I saw people exiting from the affected cars. The [crewman] closed the doors and opened them again as I told him people were exiting those doors before closing them again. I talked to the [crewman] who told me that with the fast pace and confusion he thought that I asked him to open the doors (all of the doors)....

Counting Cars

An Engineer spotted his train at a car marker for fewer cars than the train had, which resulted in the doors opening off the platform on the last two cars. All three crew members reported this event to C³RS.

From the Engineer's report:

■ *...As I pulled into the station, I brought the train to a full stop at the Y car marker in error. The Conductor opened the doors on both sides of the train (there were station platforms on each side), which left the doors in the last car completely off the platform. [A train crewmember] upon seeing the error, ushered the passengers in the last car up one car so they could safely exit the train. No passengers or crew members were injured during this incident.*

From the Assistant Conductor's report:

■ *Our train arrived at the final destination Station...I noticed we weren't platformed, but couldn't act fast enough to prevent the Conductor from opening the doors. My initial reaction was to key into the door panel in the rear car, close the doors, and then immediately contact the Conductor via the intercom. At this point, I began to close the doors manually as I walked the passengers up to the next car.*

From the Conductor's report:

■ *Engineer platformed at the Y car marker instead of the X car marker. [I] opened the doors from the second car. From my location it looked like the train was fully platformed.*

Report Intake By Craft – 2016 Totals	
Transportation	3,139
Mechanical	116
Engineering	108
Unknown	1

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Monthly Report Intake – 4 th Quarter 2016	
October	331
November	326
December	268