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On Behalf Of:
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As a railroad employee I cannot stress how important it is to have two people in the cab of freight train for the safety of the employee and the public at large. Freight trains are heavy and take a long time to stop. If there is only one person in the cab of a train and that person has a medical emergency major or minor there needs to be a second person in the cab to stop the train safely and help the engineer with their emergency. If there is only one person in the cab and that person has an issue while they are alone who would know? If there is something on the tracks and the engineer is unconscious a conductor needs to be there for the safety of the public and the engineer.

The railroad will say that it's perfectly safe to have only one person in the cab but it is not. A perfect example is the runaway train in Canada a few years ago. The following details are from Wikipedia.

The Lac-Mégantic rail disaster occurred in the town of Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, Canada, on July 6, 2013, at approximately 1:14 a.m. EDT,[1][2] when an unattended 73-car Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway (MMA) freight train carrying Bakken Formation crude oil rolled down a 1.2% grade from Nantes and derailed downtown, resulting in the explosion and fire of multiple tank cars. Forty-seven people were killed.[3] More than thirty buildings in Lac-Mégantic's town centre (roughly half of the downtown area) were destroyed,[2][4] and all but three of the thirty-nine remaining buildings had to be demolished due to petroleum contamination.[5] Initial newspaper reports described a 1 km (0.6-mile) blast radius.[6]

The Transportation Safety Board of Canada identified multiple causes for the accident, principally leaving a train unattended on a main line, failure to set enough handbrakes, and lack of a backup safety mechanism.

This was totally preventable by a second crew member. Had there been a conductor on that train the engineer would have stayed in the cab to make sure that there were brakes applied while the conductor tied a sufficient amount of handbrakes to hold the train safely in place preventing the disaster completely.

It should be mandated that in this state two crew members are required 100% percent of the time on freight trains.