

Train Crashes - Toxic Spill Being Reported



Hoofallen, Davis / Photos One of the cars somewhere in this pile up was believed to be leaking sodium hydroxide a white, orderless substance that can cause severe burns. The crash occurred Friday morning at about 9 on a remote section of tracks a mile or so from Keating Summit between Route 155 and Gardeau Road. Reports from the scene at just after noon Friday indicated that the toxic materials had reached the stream, prompting Haz-Mat officials to request that people stay out of the stream below the incident.

At least one car involved in a major train crash Friday morning was leaking potentially-toxic chemicals, prompting local emergency officials to quarantine the area and call in Haz-Mat experts.

At least 15 cars were scattered along the tracks in a remote wooded area below Route 155, near Keating Summit. People, including emergency responders, were not allowed to the scene.

The crash occurred on a stretch of tracks that is mid-way between Gardeau Road and Route 155, just above a small stream. The crash site is bordered by steep banks on both sides of the tracks. The area can be reached by vehicle by driving in the gravel along the tracks.

Cars were piled up for several hundred yards along the mangled tracks.

The train, which was traveling toward Emporium, lost its first car approximately a quarter of a mile before the site of the crash. It careened down a bank, scattering a wall of debris through the woods, crushing several small trees. Up the tracks and around a big bend, cars

were crashed as far as the eye could see from the vantage point this writer was able to reach.

Only two emergency responders, two volunteers from the Port Allegany Fire Department were on the scene and they were being told to evacuate.

Reports coming from the scene indicate that the substance allegedly spilling from one of the cars is sodium hydroxide, a white, odorless, corrosive liquid or solid that can cause severe burns.

Initial reports indicate that the substance had reached the small stream there. Word from the scene is that people are being urged to stay out of the stream below the site of the crash.

Emergency workers were gathered at the Forest House and along Gardeau Road. They were stocking up on food and drinks, preparing for a long day. Emergency responders from Cameron, Potter and McKean counties responded to the crash, which is very near to the border of each of the three counties.