



NEWS RELEASE

City of Martinez
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August 10, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE #08.10.2017

Subject: Roadway Blockage – Union Pacific Railroad

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MARTINEZ – A wait of nearly 80 minutes was caused by a stopped freight train blocking both railroad crossings on August 9, 2017. At approximately 7:03 A.M., the Martinez Police Department Dispatch Center received a phone call regarding a train blocking traffic near Berrellesa and Embarcadero.

An officer responded to find a Union Pacific train blocking vehicular traffic and a phone call was made by Dispatch to Union Pacific inquiring about the delay. Union Pacific indicated they were having technical issues and would move the train shortly. By 7:51 A.M. the train had still not moved and Dispatch initiated a second call to Union Pacific; Union Pacific indicated they were still working on the issue and at approximately 8:21 A.M., the train moved. Vehicular traffic was blocked for approximately 1 hour and 18 minutes.

The cause of the delay was found to be a malfunction in the computer controlled Positive Train Control System. This computer controlled system went online for the first time on August 9, 2017 causing an unexpected problem that took time to remedy. This technical problem surfaced at the Ozol train yard located at 1 Carquinez Scenic Drive and operators were not able to disengage the system immediately to manually move the train. The time of the delay exceeded the 10-minute prohibition for blocking traffic pursuant to Martinez Municipal Code 10.76.020. While this delay was excessive, it did not appear to have any nexus to attaching train cars; the train system malfunctioned and the train became immobilized in an unanticipated location.

The implementation of the Positive Train Control (PTC) that utilizes communication-based/processor-based train control technology is mandated to be in effect no later than December 31, 2018 to improve railway safety. Union Pacific utilized this technology for the first time yesterday and unfortunately experienced this problem.

In the event the public has a complaint about Union Pacific and their train operations, the dispatch center can be reached at 1 (800) 848-8715.

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