

**Morrisville Brush Truck Struck by Train, 1985**

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From the archives of our friends at the Morrisville Fire Department comes this tale of an usual apparatus accident. On August 14, 1985, this Chevrolet brush truck (model and year?) was struck a train... and survived. The *Cary News* on August 18 reported the story in an article written by George Jeter.

Happened on a Wednesday afternoon. Crews were fighting a "more or less routine" woods fire call along the tracks between the "crossings at Secondary Road 3014 and the Huntington development project near Morrisville." Then they heard the whistle of Norfolk Southern Engine 2795.

Fireman Robert Beard said they'd "just got the hose off" the truck, when they heard the train "rounding a bend to the west." He worried the truck might derail the train. Another firefighter said "I didn't even think about the truck - I saw that train and I was gone."

Some five volunteer firemen were "on or around the truck" when the whistle was heard. They "lept and ran from the truck," which had been driven down the tracks, to reach "flames along the steep banks of the railroad embankment."

The operator of the freight train tried to stop. Though slowed, the engine struck the truck at about twenty-five miles per hour. The fire engine was pushed at least forty feet down the track before coming to a stop. The collision happened about 3:30 p.m.

No one was injured in the impact, though at least one firefighter was "cut by brambles" as they climbed the banks of the easement.

Crews resumed firefighting using "backpack water sprayers". One "from from the YRAC Rural Fire Department" also arrived to help. Once the fire was extinguished, the damaged brush truck was moved "off the tracks by hand" to be towed out of the "narrow easement land."

What other such accidents have occurred in North Carolina?

We [blogged in December](#) about a Charlotte engine struck in 1973. We also compiled *Hose & Nozzle* reports [in a posting](#), that included the March or April 1970 incident involving a Monroe pumper.

The worst such accident happened in Fayetteville. On March 17, 2000, Fire Engineer David Sharp died after the aerial tower he was driving was struck by a train. He was the lone occupant of the apparatus, and was returning from an automatic fire alarm.

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*Cary News/George Jeter photo*



*Morrisville Fire Department photos*

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