Focus in CTA crash falls on operator fatigue & braking system

Federal investigators will focus on whether a CTA train operator fell asleep at the controls and if an automatic braking system was working properly as they seek to pinpoint the cause of a spectacular crash Monday that left a Blue Line car perched atop an escalator.

The operator may have fallen asleep shortly before her train smashed through a “bumping post” at the end of the track at O’Hare International Airport just before 3 a.m., according to a transit union representative.

The CTA employee, whose name has not been released, said after the crash that she was tired, said Robert Kelly, president of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 308.

“I can confirm that she was extremely tired,” Kelly said. “Indications are she might have dozed off.”

Other crucial issues that will come under sharp focus in the inquiry include whether the train was speeding as it entered the station at the airport and whether the safety control system was working.

The train was traveling with such momentum that it smashed through a barrier designed to stop trains at the end of the line, jumped the platform and climbed the escalator.

More than 30 people were hurt, though none of the injuries was considered life-threatening, officials said. Had the incident occurred at any time other than the middle of the night, scores could have been killed or injured, experts said.

Blue Line service to the airport will be halted until authorities finish studying the crash site and decide how to remove the wreckage. Chicago Tribune

Worker struck by elevator in River North apartment building

March 20, 2014 (CHICAGO) — A man was injured while working in an elevator shaft in a River North apartment building Thursday morning. The elevator repair company employee, believed to be in his 20s, was working in a shaft in a building in the 300 block of West Illinois Street when he was struck by an elevator, according to Fire Media Affairs Director Larry Langford said. Firefighters pulled the man from the shaft about 10 a.m. and took him to Northwestern Memorial Hospital, where he is listed in serious condition, according to Fire Media. Sun Times Media Wire

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      Boarding begins at 6:30 p.m.
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