



# News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Trespass Incident: Train Strikes Four-Wheeler on Talkeetna Bridge**

*Trespassing incident causes minor damage to locomotive, no reported injuries*

Talkeetna, Alaska — Shortly after noon on Tuesday, May 21, a southbound passenger train struck a four-wheeler on Alaska Railroad (ARRC) Bridge 227.1 just north of Talkeetna. The operator of the four-wheeler was able to get clear of the tracks in time, and the four-wheeler was struck and knocked clear of the tracks by the train.

The crew brought the train to a stop to inspect for damage, which was limited to minor damage to the front of the locomotive at the point of impact. No injuries were reported by the crew or passengers, and the train was able to safely continue service. The operator of the four-wheeler left the scene prior to the arrival of ARRC Police and Security, which is investigating the incident.

"The consequences of trespassing on railroad tracks can be very severe – from significant equipment damage to the worst case scenario of serious injury or death," said Meghan Clemens, ARRC External Affairs Director. "We are thankful that yesterday's incident was not the worst case scenario."

ARRC also sent a bridge inspection crew following the incident. Bridge 227.1 is nearing the end of a \$9 million rehabilitation project, inclusive of an attached trainman's walkway used by many in the Chase community.

Clemens said that since completing the replacement of the walkway, designed to duplicate the width of the previous 47"-wide facility, ARRC has heard from a number of community members that the new walkway is more rigid and too narrow for access. On May 20, ARRC had initiated a change order to widen the walkway.

"We've seen repeatedly peoples' willingness to trespass over the train trestle when their recreational vehicle exceeds the width of the walkway, with yesterday's incident serving as a sobering reminder of how dangerous such trespassing can be," said Clemens. "Ultimately, the walkway is railroad infrastructure built to support safe railroad operations, whether that's employee access for maintenance purposes or mitigating trespass on the railroad bridge."

The details of a widened walkway are under development with ARRC's project managers and contractors. ARRC anticipates a widened walkway to be completed in June 2025.

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