



How do you see it?  
 Too thin     Never too thin

REUTERS   
 reuters.com  
 ↻ replay

Change Edition   Search   Login/Register | Help & Info | 

## Human error to blame for German "maglev" train crash

Wed 4 Oct 2006 15:09:20 BST

BERLIN, Oct 4 (Reuters) - Human error was responsible for last month's high-speed train crash in north-western Germany which killed 23 people and injured 10 more, the local German state prosecutor said on Wednesday.

"Both employees in the control room made a clear mistake," said state prosecutor Alexander Retemeyer.

The Transrapid magnetic levitation train, which floats on a magnetic cushion, hit a maintenance vehicle on a test track supported by five-metre concrete stilts in the Emsland area of Germany nearly two weeks ago.

The radio log showed both employees had given the all-clear for the Transrapid "maglev" train although the 60-tonne maintenance truck was still on the track, said Retemeyer.

"The train driver was partly responsible as he drove off although the obstacle was still on the track and he did not apply the brakes before the collision although visibility was good," said Retemeyer.

The driver was killed in the crash.

The employees would be officially investigated once they were out of shock, said the state prosecutor's office.

The crash has raised questions about the safety of the Transrapid technology, though the company that builds the trains insists the technology is safe.

The costly train, which set a speed record of 450 km per hour (250 miles per hour) in 1993, was developed by a joint venture between German industrial firms Siemens AG <SIEGn.DE> and Thyssen Krupp <TKAG.DE>.

The world's only commercial Transrapid line runs in China between Shanghai and its airport and Germany's southern state of Bavaria is considering whether to build a stretch from Munich airport to the city centre.

© Reuters 2006. All Rights Reserved.