Train, truck collide in Mount Wolf, no injuries

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YORK, PA -- Kayla Leahy was inside her Mount Wolf home Monday afternoon when she heard what she later learned was the sound of a train and a tractor-trailer colliding.

"It was like a booming noise,"the 17-year-old said. "...And it made our dogs cry."

The crash occurred just after 1 p.m. Monday on Walnut Street at the train tracks, said Chief Ryan Brenneman with Eagle Fire Company in Mount Wolf.

The train pushed the tractor-trailer about 200 to 250 feet down the tracks. The tractor-trailer's fuel tanks saddled the tracks, scraping and eventually rupturing, Brenneman said. A hydraulic tank on the truck also ruptured.

The driver of the truck had "very minor injuries" and declined to be transported to a hospital, Brenneman said. The man was "very lucky." No one from the Norfolk Southern train crew was injured.

The cleanup would take hours. A crane would be needed to separate the twisted metal of the tractor-trailer from the front of the train, Brenneman said Monday afternoon.

Also, firefighters and county haz-mat members stopped fuel from leaking into a nearby creek, but a private haz-mat company was expected on the scene later for a more intensive cleanup, he said.

Northeastern Regional Police and Norfolk Southern will investigate the crash.

According to police, the tractor-trailer driver said he stopped at the sign before crossing the railroad tracks, looked both ways, but did not see the train. As the tractor-trailer crossed the tracks, the driver said he heard the train horn and then felt the impact.

The train came from York with three engines and 41 empty freight cars, Dave Pidgeon, a spokesman for Norfolk Southern, said in an email. It was headed for Enola.

By early Monday evening, Brenneman said he expected the area to be cleared for traffic within the next few hours, but he said cleanup was expected to continue Tuesday.

Russell Grim, 88, who lives nearby, said he heard the crash.

"I heard the train coming, and I heard the crash and I told my wife, 'He hit something,'" he said. "You could tell ... you knew something was in the road."

Ronald Witmer, 79, was one of the people who gathered in the area around the crash to see the wreckage and the cleanup.

He said that in 1959, he was driving a car that skidded on ice and was struck by a train in the same area of Mount Wolf. He lost his left arm as a result of that crash.

"This brings back memories," Witmer said.

Police seeking information

Anyone with information on Monday's crash may call Northeastern Regional Police at 266-6195.