

Serious bridge accidents in world history

The case of a container ship collapsing on the vital Francis Scott Key bridge in Baltimore city (Maryland state, USA) on March 26 is shocking the world. But this is just one of many similar incidents that have occurred globally over the past half century.



Tangiwai Bridge disaster in New Zealand on December 24, 1953

When part of the wall blocking Ruapehu volcanic lake collapsed on the evening of December 24, 1953, water accompanied by huge silt flowed down the mountainside, carrying trees, rocks and ice into the Whangaehu River. A giant 6m-high wave of water, mud and rocks hit and swept away a concrete pillar of a railway bridge in Tangiwai, nearly 10km from Waiouru.

At 10:21 that night, the Wellington–Auckland night express train with 9 carriages moving at a speed of about 65 km/h arrived at this seriously weakened bridge. When the bridge collapsed under the weight of the train, the train's engine plunged into the river and dragged five second-class carriages into the water.

The force of the floodwaters destroyed four of these carriages while the first-class carriage, Car Z, wobbled on the edge of the ruined bridge for several minutes before continuing to topple into the river. It rolled downstream before coming to rest on the bank as the water level receded.

This was New Zealand's worst railway disaster and the 8th deadliest railway disaster in the world at the time. A total of 151 people out of 285 passengers and crew on board died.

Collapse of railway bridge in Ulyanovsk, Soviet Union in 1983

The river cruise ship named "Aleksandr Suvorov" departed from Rostov to Moscow on June 5, 1983, with an estimated 330 passengers, 30 crew members and 35 service staff on board.

At 10:45 that evening, an auction took place on the upper deck of the ship, attracting a large number of attendees. The ship's captain, Vladimir Kleymenov, retired to his cabin to rest and let helmsman Uvarov and first mate Vladimir Mitenkov take control of the cruise ship.

When this train approached the Ulyanovsk railway bridge over the Volga River, the accident occurred when the train did not pass through its usual passage. From shore, the controller quickly realized the ship was going in the wrong direction. Despite the constant warning messages sent to the ship and the launching of emergency flares, the controllers watched in horror as the "Aleksandr Suvorov" rushed at full speed into the bridge.

A terrible collision completely destroyed the cinema room and the deck where passengers gathered. Matters became worse when the freight train above the bridge derailed and fell onto the "Aleksandr Suvorov" train. The accident killed a total of 177 people. Fortunately, however, the ship remained afloat, thus protecting the surviving passengers and crew until rescue boats arrived 40 minutes later.

Collapse of the Hyatt Regency pedestrian bridge in Kansas City, Missouri, USA in 1981

This accident occurred at the Hyatt Regency hotel in Kansas City, Missouri on July 17, 1981, killing 114 people. At the time of the incident, two crowded pedestrian suspension bridges running along the length of the building's lobby suddenly collapsed, while about 2,000 diners were present in the hotel lobby below to organize a party. dance party.

Most of those who died were in the lobby, or on the second floor walkway due to being crushed by material falling from the bridge.

The overhead bridges are held by bars connected to the roof, however the pedestrian bridge on the 2nd floor is connected to the pedestrian bridge on the 4th floor, not the roof. This means that the pedestrian bridge on the 4th floor is having to bear twice the intended load. Subsequent investigation revealed that the design of the connecting rods had been changed by the manufacturer at a late stage to simplify assembly.

Veligonda railway bridge collapsed in India in 2005

The Veligonda railway bridge disaster occurred on October 29, 2005 near Veligonda town, south of Hyderabad in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Specifically that night, the "Delta Express" train was moving south, carrying hundreds of passengers, when an irrigation tank located upstream of the railway line broke, pushing a huge volume of water down. canal and destroy the bridge in the dark.

When the passenger train crashed into a broken section of the bridge a short time later, four carriages crashed into a field, while another three fell into the canal and were swept further into deep water. Official statistics show that at least 114 people were killed and more than 200 injured in this accident.

Eschede Bridge disaster in Germany in 1998

This accident occurred in June 1998 in Germany because an intercity express train (ICE) called "Wilhelm Conrad Rontgen" derailed while at a speed of 200 km/h, destroying two columns of the train. the bridge it crosses at Eschede. According to the German National Medical Library, "the force of the impact combined with the speed of the train's rear engine pushed the rear carriages into the bridge structure".

The destruction of the bridge's columns caused a shower of about 300 tons of concrete onto passing train cars, especially cars 5 and 6. At the time, experts described the process. the train cars crashed into the wreckage 'like a folding ruler'. The force of the impact compressed eight ICE train cars down to the length of a car in just a few seconds, killing most of the passengers instantly. .

Subsequent investigation results showed that the cause of the accident was due to a tire on the front axle of the first carriage breaking. After breaking, a piece of metal from the tire penetrated the train car and caused the train to derail. This incident left a total of 101 people dead.

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