Composition of the VIA Rail Train

On the morning of February 8, 1986, VIA Rail's No. 4 train, the combined Super Continental and Skeena, was travelling from Jasper east to Edmonton on its transcontinental journey. It consisted of 14 units in the following order:

FP9A Diesel locomotive	FP9A Diesel locomotive (inoperative)
F9B Diesel locomotive	Steam generator car
Baggage car	Baggage car
Coach	Coach
Dome car	Lounge car
Sleeping car	Sleeping car
Sleeping car	Steam generator car

The unusual make up of the train was the result of two separate trains being joined together in Jasper. The first seven units had originated in Vancouver, and the next six units had originated in Prince Rupert. The last unit, the steam generator car, was added in Jasper on its way to Edmonton for maintenance. In all, 115 people were on the train: 94 passengers, 14 stewards, and seven crew.

Composition of the Canadian National (CN) Railway Train

Canadian National (CN) Railway's westbound train No. 413 consisted of 118 unit in the following order:

- Three locomotives (EMD GP38-2W number 5586, and two EMD SD40 numbers 5062 and 5104)
- A high-speed spreader
- 35 cylindrical hoppers loaded with grain
- Seven bulkhead flat cars loaded with large pipes
- 45 hoppers loaded with sulphur
- 20 loaded tank cars
- Six more grain cars
- A caboose

The train was 6,124 feet (1,866 meters) long and weighed 12,804 tons. In the front locomotive were engineer John Edward (Jack) Hudson, aged 48, and brakeman Mark Edwards, aged 25. In the caboose was conductor Wayne "Smitty" Smith, aged 33.c