

Opinion: Amtrak must know who is on its trains

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the July 5, 2011, Reno Gazette-Journal.*

Amtrak officials are undoubtedly right that it would be impossible, as well as counterproductive, for them to know where every passenger is on a train at any given time, especially on long-distance trains like the California Zephyr involved in a fatal crossing accident on June 24.

A train is not a plane, after all, and it would be unreasonable to expect a passenger to stay tethered to a seat or compartment as they are in a modern airliner.

It is not unreasonable, however, for Amtrak, the quasi-government corporation that runs the nation's long-haul trains, to know who's on board or, at the very least, how many people are riding the rails.

Almost 10 years after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Arlington, Va., it is shocking that Amtrak still has no system in place that would tell officials how many passengers are on a train.

Read the whole story