

Man hit by train, loses his left arm

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LYNN — A 35-year-old rooming house resident was in guarded condition today at the Lynn Hospital special care unit after losing his left arm when he was hit by a train Wednesday afternoon near Chatham Street.

Police at the scene quoted a Boston and Maine engineer who drove the northbound Boston and Maine Buddliner that struck Charles F. Roberts, 75 Silsbee St., as saying he thought the victim was "a bag of trash" from a distance.

Youths in the vicinity frequently place objects on the tracks to be smashed by passing trains. The engineer said when he approached closer he realized it was a human and tried to apply the emergency brakes.

See TRAIN, Page 8



Victim comforted at train crash scene

(Item Photo: Hoey)

Lynn Item - 6/15/78

Train

■ FROM PAGE ONE

The train stopped too late, pinning Roberts's arm under a wheel. Rescue personnel, Lt. Donald Sullivan and Firemen Fred Szalkowski and Joel Marquez, credited this with preventing Roberts from bleeding to death at the scene.

The Rescue workers rushed Roberts to the hospital, where doctors amputated the arm and treated him for an acute skull fracture and several broken left ribs.

Police at the scene were not aware why Roberts was on the tracks.

Police Lt. George Harney said this morning no charges were being brought against the engineer, Paul Comeau of Malden, and it appeared from the evidence that Roberts was deliberately lying on the tracks or had fallen.

Comeau told police at the scene that as he went under the bridge at Green Street, an estimated 300 feet from where Roberts was lying, he saw what appeared to be "a bundle of rags" on the outer rail ahead.

Comeau said the train was traveling 30 miles an hour at the time and he slowed to 20 miles an hour as he proceeded toward the object.

When he was 50 feet away from Roberts, Comeau said he realized the object was a man lying across the tracks and he used the emergency brake, stopping at Parrott Street.

Police said the train had struck the man and gone about eight to 10 feet past him, and was stopped when they arrived with the right first wheel on the man's arm.