

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON

REPORT NO. 3755

THE BALTIMORE AND OHIO RAILROAD COMPANY

IN RE ACCIDENT

NEAR ENFIELD, ILL., ON

MAY 17, 1957

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SUMMARY

Date: May 17, 1957

Railroad: Baltimore and Ohio

Location: Enfield, Ill.

Kind of accident: Collision

Equipment involved: Freight train : Motor-truck

Train number: Extra 690 West

Locomotive number: Diesel-electric
unit 690

Consist: 7 cars, caboose

Speeds: 15 m. p. h. : Undetermined

Operation: Timetable and train orders

Track: Single; tangent; 1.12 percent
descending grade westward

Highway: Tangent; crosses track at angle of 90°;
1.43 percent ascending grade northward

Weather: Clear

Time: 3:55 p. m.

Casualties: 1 killed; 4 injured

Cause: Motor-truck being driven onto track
immediately in front of approaching
train

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT NO. 3755

IN THE MATTER OF MAKING ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORTS
UNDER THE ACCIDENT REPORTS ACT OF MAY 6, 1910.

THE BALTIMORE AND OHIO RAILROAD COMPANY

July 18, 1957

Accident near Enfield, Ill., on May 17, 1957, caused by a
motor-truck being driven onto the track immediately in
front of an approaching train.

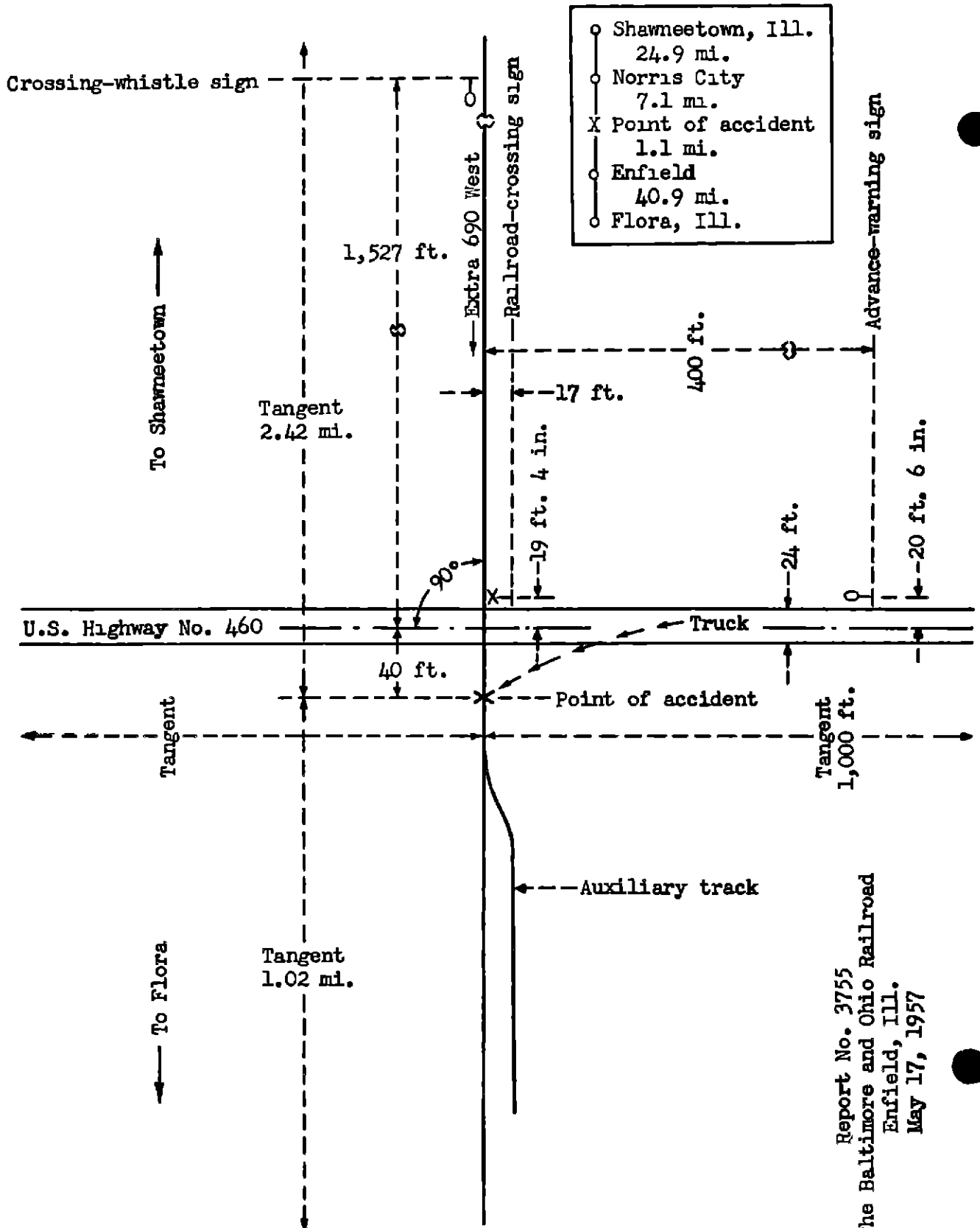
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

TUGGLE, Commissioner:

On May 17, 1957, there was a collision between a freight train on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and a motor-truck near a rail-highway grade crossing near Enfield, Ill., which resulted in the death of the driver of the motor-truck, and the injury of four train-service employees.

¹

Under authority of section 17 (2) of the Interstate Commerce Act the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the Commission to Commissioner Tuggle for consideration and disposition.



Report No. 3755
 The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad
 Enfield, Ill.
 May 17, 1957

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the St. Louis Division extending between Shawneetown and Flora, Ill., 74.0 miles, a single-track line, over which trains are operated by timetable, train orders, and a manual block-signal system for trains following passenger trains. At a point 32.0 miles west of Shawneetown and 1.1 miles east of Enfield the railroad is crossed at grade by U. S. Highway No. 460. The accident occurred on the main track at a point 40 feet west of the center-line of this highway. Timetable directions on the railroad are east and west, and these directions are used in this report. In the vicinity of the point of accident a west-bound train by timetable direction moves toward the north by compass direction. The track is tangent throughout a distance of 2.42 miles immediately east of the point of accident and 1.02 miles westward. The grade is 1.12 percent descending westward at the point of accident.

U. S. Highway No. 460 is surfaced with bituminous material to a width of approximately 24 feet with a dirt shoulder approximately 7 feet in width on each side. It intersects the railroad at an angle of 90 degrees. Planks measuring 6 inches by 8 inches are laid on each side of each rail throughout the width of the crossing, and the remaining area of the crossing is surfaced with bituminous material to the level of the tops of the rails. The highway is tangent throughout a distance of more than 1,000 feet immediately south of the crossing and several hundred feet northward. Throughout a distance of 1,000 feet immediately south of the crossing the grade for north-bound vehicles averages 1.43 percent ascending.

A circular railroad-crossing advance warning sign is located 20 feet 6 inches east of the center-line of the highway and 400 feet south of the track. This sign is 30 inches in diameter and is mounted on two vertical supports 5 feet above the level of the highway. It bears two diagonal lines intersecting at right angles and the letters "RR" in black on a yellow background. A standard crossbuck railroad-crossing sign is located 19 feet 4 inches east of the center-line of the highway and 17 feet south of the center-line of the track. This sign is mounted on a mast approximately 7 feet 6 inches above the level of the highway and bears the words "RAILROAD CROSSING" in reflectorized black letters on a white background. A similar sign is located in the northwest angle of the intersection. A crossing-whistle sign for west-bound trains is located 1,527 feet east of the crossing.

This carrier's operating rules read in part as follows:

Engine Whistle Signals.

14. * * *

Note.--The signals prescribed are illustrated by "o" for short sounds and "--" for long sounds * * *

Sound.	Indication
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* * *

(1) -- -- o ----	Approaching public crossings at grade; to be prolonged or repeated until crossing is reached.
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18. The headlight will be displayed to the front of every train by day and night. * * *

33. The engine bell must be rung:

* * *

Approaching and passing public road crossings at grade.

* * *

Laws Relating to Motor Vehicles, State of Illinois, read in part as follows:

Article VII, Paragraph 84.

The driver * * * of any vehicle carrying explosives or flammable liquids as a cargo or part of a cargo, before crossing at grade any track or tracks of a railroad, shall stop such vehicle within 50 feet but not less than 10 feet from the nearest rail of such railroad and while so stopped shall listen and look in both directions along such tracks for any approaching train * * * and shall not proceed until he can do so safely.

* * *

The maximum authorized speed for freight trains in the vicinity of the point of accident is 35 miles per hour.

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Description of Accident

Extra 690 West, a west-bound freight train, consisted of diesel-electric unit 690, seven cars, and a caboose. This train departed from Norris City, 24.9 miles west of Shawneetown, the last open office, at 3:40 p. m. While it was moving at a speed of approximately 15 miles per hour, it struck a motor-truck at a point 32.0 miles west of Shawneetown and 1.1 miles east of Enfield. The accident occurred 40 feet west of the point at which the railroad is crossed at grade by U. S. Highway No. 460.

The vehicle involved was a three-unit tank truck consisting of a Hendrickson tractor, a semi-trailer, and a trailer owned and operated by Commercial Transport, Inc., of Belleville, Ill. The driver, who was the sole occupant, held Illinois chauffeur's license No. 191-237. The tractor, the semi-trailer, and the trailer bore 1957 Illinois licenses X 825, ST 31448, and V 155. The tractor was powered by a 6-cylinder 175-horsepower diesel engine. All units of the vehicle were equipped with air brakes. The light weight was 28,000 pounds, the total length was 49 feet, and the capacity was 7,400 gallons. At the time of the accident the cargo consisted of 7,400 gallons of gasoline. This vehicle approached the crossing from the south on U. S. Highway No. 460. A short distance south of the crossing it turned toward the northwest, and while moving at an undetermined speed it moved onto the track at a point 40 feet west of the center-line of the highway and was struck by Extra 690 West.

The locomotive and the front truck of the first car of Extra 690 West were derailed at a facing-point auxiliary-track switch several feet west of the point of accident. The locomotive stopped upright and approximately in line with the track with the front end 116 feet west of the point of accident. There were no separations between the units of the train. The tractor was separated from the semi-trailer and stopped on the north side of the track 38 feet west of the point of accident. The semi-trailer and the trailer stopped on the south side of the track and parallel to it. The cargo of the motor-truck became ignited, and the motor-truck was destroyed, the locomotive was badly damaged, and the first two cars of Extra 690 West were considerably damaged as a result of the collision and the subsequent fire.

The engineer, the fireman, the front brakeman, and the flagman of Extra 690 West were injured.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 3:55 p. m.

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the accident the average daily movement over the crossing was 1 train. During the 24-hour period beginning at 12:01 a. m., June 4, 1957, 1,465 automobiles, 783 motor-trucks, and 1 school bus passed over the crossing.

Diesel-electric unit 690 is of the road-switcher type.

Discussion

As Extra 690 West was approaching the point where the accident occurred the engineer and the front brakeman were maintaining a lookout ahead from their positions in the control compartment of the locomotive, the flagman was standing in the control compartment, and the conductor was in the caboose. The headlight was lighted brightly. The engineer said that the train passed the crossing-whistle sign east of the point of accident at a speed of approximately 35 miles per hour and that he then made a brake application which reduced the speed to 15 or 17 miles per hour as the locomotive closely approached the crossing. He said that he began to sound the grade-crossing whistle signal in the vicinity of the crossing-whistle sign and that he prolonged the signal until the accident occurred. The locomotive bell was ringing during this time. The engineer said that as the locomotive was about to enter the crossing the front brakeman called a warning, and he immediately placed the brake valve in emergency position. From their positions in the control compartment neither the engineer nor the flagman could see the truck before the accident occurred. The front brakeman was so seriously injured in the accident that he could not be questioned during this investigation. The fireman said that when the locomotive reached a point about 800 feet east of the crossing he saw the motor-truck approaching. He estimated that the speed of the train at this time was 15 or 20 miles per hour and that the truck was moving faster than the train. He said that there was no apparent reduction in the speed of the truck until it reached a point about 150 feet south of the track. At this time the driver apparently applied the brakes, and after the speed was somewhat reduced he turned the truck toward the left in an attempt to avoid moving onto the track. The fireman said that when he saw that the truck would not stop short of the crossing he opened the emergency brake valve. Apparently he took this action at approximately the time that the front brakeman warned the engineer. The conductor said that when the train reached a point about 1/4 mile east of the crossing he saw the truck approaching at a distance which he thought was about 1/2 mile south of the crossing. He thought the speed of the truck was 50 or 60 miles per hour. When the truck reached a point about 1,200

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feet south of the crossing it disappeared from his view behind a knoll. The conductor was seated on the right hand side of the cupola, and from this location he did not see the truck as it closely approached the crossing.

A skid mark on the paved surface of the highway indicated that the brakes of the motor-truck were applied as the truck was closely approaching the crossing. This mark began at a point 1-1/2 feet east of the center-line of the highway and 132 feet south of the center-line of the track and extended toward the northwest and off the edge of the paved surface at a point 43 feet south of the track.

The driver of the truck was killed in the accident, and the reason for his failure to stop short of the crossing is not known. He had been employed in this capacity during a period of somewhat over 3 years in the region in which the accident occurred and was familiar with the routes traversed.

After the accident occurred it was found that a west-bound train approaching the crossing was visible throughout a distance of more than 1/2 mile immediately east of the crossing from a north-bound vehicle moving throughout a distance of 1/2 mile immediately south of the crossing.

Cause

This accident was caused by a motor-truck being driven onto the track immediately in front of an approaching train.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this eighteenth day of July, 1957.

By the Commission, Commissioner Tuggle.

(SEAL)

HAROLD D. McCOY,

Secretary.

Interstate Commerce Commission

Washington 25, D C

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

RETURN AFTER FIVE DAYS

**POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION**