

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

REPORT NO. 1643
THE BALTIMORE AND OHIO RAIL ROAD COMPANY
IN RE ACCIDENT
NEAR LUMBERTON, W. VA., ON
JULY 31 1955

SUMMARY

Date	July 21, 1955
Railroad.	Baltimore and Ohio
Location.	Lumberport, W. Va.
Kind of accident:	Head-end collision
Trains involved	Freight Locomotive
Train numbers:	Extra 904 East : Extra 4433 West
Engine numbers:	Diesel-electric 4433 Unit 904
Consist:	34 cars, caboose
Estimated speeds.	17 m. p. h. : 10-20 m. p. h.
Operation:	Timetable and train orders
Track.	Single, 6°55' curve, 1.00 percent descending grade eastward
Weather.	Clear
Time.	6:15 p. m.
Casualties:	1 killed; 7 injured
Cause:	Overlapping of authority of two opposing extra trains

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT NO. 3643

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

THE BALTIMORE AND OHIO RAIL ROAD COMPANY

September 6, 1955

Accident near Lumberport, W. Va., on July 21, 1955,
caused by overlapping of authority of two
approaching extra trains.

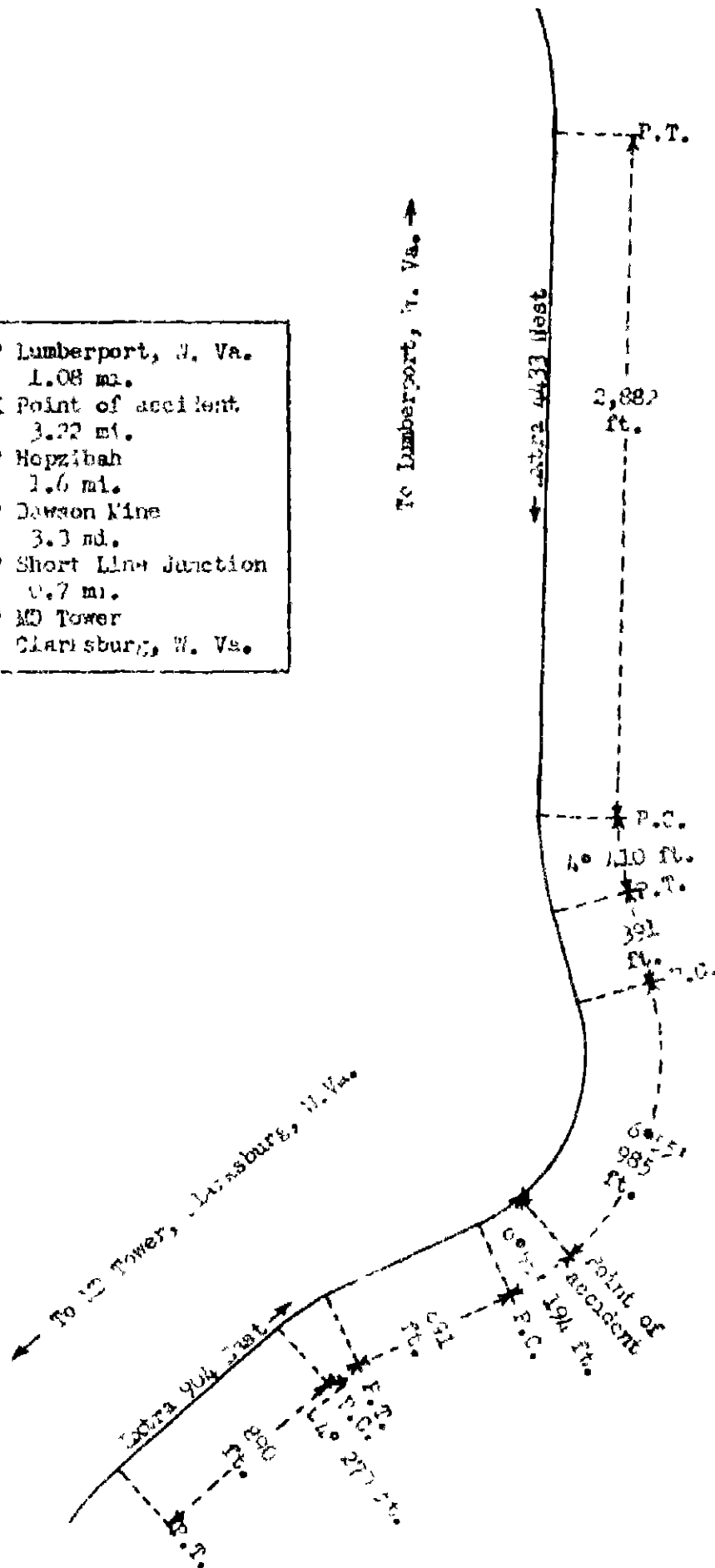
¹
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

CLARKE, Commissioner.

On July 21, 1955, there was a head-end collision between a freight train and a locomotive on the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road near Lumberport, W. Va., which resulted in the death of one employee, and the injury of seven employees.

¹
Under authority of section 17 (2) of the Interstate Commerce Act the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the Commission to Commissioner Clarke for consideration and disposition.

•	Lumberport, W. Va.
	1.08 mi.
X	Point of accident
	3.22 mi.
•	Hopzibah
	1.6 mi.
•	Dawson Mine
	3.3 mi.
•	Short Line Junction
	0.7 mi.
•	MD Tower
	Clarksburg, W. Va.



Report No. 3042
Baltimore and Ohio Railroad
at Lumberport, W. Va.
July 21, 1955

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Monongah Division extending between MD Tower, near Clarksburg, and Lumberport, W. Va., 9.90 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line, over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders. There is no block system in use. The accident occurred on the main track 8.82 miles east of MD Tower and 1.08 miles west of the station at Lumberport. From the west there are, in succession, a tangent 890 feet in length, a 4° curve to the right 270 feet, a tangent 621 feet, and a 6°55' curve to the left 194 feet to the point of accident and 265 feet eastward. From the east there are, in succession, a tangent 2,882 feet in length, a 4° curve to the left 410 feet, a tangent 391 feet, and the curve on which the accident occurred. The grade is 1.00 percent descending eastward at the point of accident. Between points 139 feet west and 61 feet east of the point of accident the track is laid in a shallow sidehill cut. The north wall of this cut rises above the track on a slope of approximately 2 in 1.

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

37. * * *

Extra trains * * * must be governed by train orders with respect to opposing extra trains.

201. For movements not provided for by rule or time-table, train orders will be issued by the Train Dispatcher * * *

* * *

The maximum authorized speeds in the vicinity of the point of accident are 30 miles per hour for freight trains and 25 miles per hour for locomotives without cars.

Description of Accident

At MD Tower the crew of Diesel-electric locomotive 904, assigned to mine-run service, received copies of train order No. 509, made complete at 4:24 p. m., reading in part as follows.

ENG 904 WORKS EXTRA 4 30 FOUR THIRTY PM UNTIL
6 10 SIX TEN P M BETWEEN SHORT LINE JCT AND
LUMBERPORT NOT PROTECTING AGAINST EXTRA TRAINS
ENG 904 RUN EXTRA LAWSON MINE TO LUMBERPORT
* * *

Short Line Jct. and Dawson Mine are, respectively, 0.70 mile and 4.00 miles east of MD Tower. Between MD Tower and Short Line Jct. trains are operated by signal indications. There are no open offices between MD Tower and Lumberport. Work Extra 904, with the locomotive headed westward and pushing a caboose, departed east-bound from MD Tower at 4:59 p. m. and proceeded to Dawson Mine where switching service was performed and 31 loaded cars were added to the train. It then proceeded to Hepzibah, 3.22 miles west of the point of accident, where additional switching service was performed. At this point three loaded cars were added to the rear of the train and a brake test was made. This train, with the locomotive pushing the caboose and pulling 34 cars, departed east-bound from Hepzibah about 6:02 p. m., assumed its authority under train order No. 509 to proceed as Extra 904 East on expiration of the work order at 6:10 p. m., and while moving at a speed of 17 miles per hour it collided with Extra 4433 West at a point 1.00 miles west of the station at Lumberport.

At Lumberport the crew of engine 4433, an east-bound steam locomotive of the 2-8-2 type assigned to helper service, received, among others, copies of train order No. 521 reading as follows:

ENG 4433 RUN EXTRA LUMBERPORT TO SHORT LINE JCT

Train order No. 521 was made complete at 6.08 p. m. This train departed from Lumberport at 6.13 p. m., and while moving at a speed variously estimated as from 15 to 20 miles per hour it collided with Extra 904 East.

The caboose, the locomotive, the first four cars, and the front truck of the fifth car of Extra 904 East were derailed. The caboose overrode the buffer at the east end of the Diesel-electric unit and telescoped the cab of the unit. The locomotive stopped approximately in line with the track, and the derailed cars stopped in various positions on or near the track. The locomotive was considerably damaged. The caboose and the first car were destroyed, and the other derailed cars were somewhat damaged. The engine truck and the driving wheels of locomotive 4433 were derailed. This locomotive stopped upright and in line with the track. The front end was somewhat damaged.

The conductor of Extra 904 East was killed. The engineer, the fireman, the front brakeman, and the flagman of Extra 904 East and the engineer, the fireman, and the flagman of Extra 4433 West were injured.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 6 15 p. m.

Diesel-electric unit 904 is of the road-switcher type.

Discussion

The rules of this carrier provide that extra trains will be authorized by train orders and will be governed by train orders with respect to opposing extra trains.

Train order No. 509, issued at 4:24 p. m., authorized engine 904 to work extra 4:30 p. m. until 6:10 p. m. between Short Line Jct. and Lumberport not protecting against extra trains, and it also authorized engine 904 to proceed as Extra 904 East between Dawson Mine and Lumberport. This train

order was transmitted to the operator at MD Tower but was not transmitted to the operator at Lumberport. Train order No. 521, which was issued at 6:08 p. m., authorized the movement of Extra 4433 West between Lumberport and Short Line Jct. A copy of the work order which was contained in train order No. 509 was not delivered to the crew of Extra 4433 West when that train was authorized to enter the working limits prior to 6:10 p. m., and no provision was made to establish a meeting point between Extra 904 East and Extra 4433 West or to restrict the movement of either train with respect to the other train. This resulted in an overlapping of the authority of the two trains.

The accident occurred in a sidehill cut on a curve. As Extra 904 East and Extra 4433 West were approaching the point where the accident occurred vegetation and the wall of the cut restricted the view of the track ahead from the west and the east to distances of 312 feet and 307 feet, respectively. The front brakeman of Extra 904 East was on the platform at the east end of the caboose, and the flagman and the conductor were seated inside the caboose. The front brakeman said that when he saw the opposing train he called a warning. The front brakeman and the flagman jumped off the caboose before the collision occurred. The engineer said that he moved the brake valve to emergency position when the front end of locomotive 4433 came into view. Examination of the tape of the speed-recording device after the accident occurred disclosed that Extra 904 East was moving at a speed of 17 miles per hour at the point of collision. The enginemen, the flagman, and a road foreman of engines were in the cab of locomotive 4433 as it approached the point where the accident occurred. The brakes of the locomotive had been tested and had functioned properly when used. The engineer said that the speed was about 18 or 20 miles per hour when he saw the caboose at the front end of the opposing train. He immediately closed the throttle and made an emergency application of the brakes. He did not think the speed was materially reduced before the collision occurred. The fireman thought the speed was about 15 miles per hour at the point of collision.

The train dispatcher said that at the time he issued train order No. 509 he did not plan to authorize an east-bound extra train to leave Lumberport until after 6:10 p. m. and after Extra 904 East had arrived at that point. For this reason he did not transmit the order to the operator at Lumberport. He said that when he issued train order No. 521, which authorized the movement of Extra 4433 West between Lumberport and Short Line Jct., he overlooked the fact that Extra 904 East had been authorized by train order No. 509 to move between Dawson Mine and Lumberport. As a result, he made no provision to restrict the movement of either train with respect to the other train.

The investigation disclosed that in this territory it has been a practice to issue train orders which contain provisions authorizing a locomotive to work extra between designated points and between stated times not protecting against extra trains, and authorizing the same locomotive to run extra between points within the working limits. Officials of the carrier interpret this form of order as authorizing the designated train to proceed as an extra after the expiration of the time during which it was authorized as a work extra. This form of order is used to relieve the crew of the designated train from providing flag protection until expiration of the time stated in the work order. Trains in mine-run service in this territory frequently are operated with the cabooses at the front end for the convenience of the train crew.

Cause

This accident was caused by overlapping of authority of two opposing extra trains.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this sixth day of September, 1955.

By the Commission, Commissioner Clarke.

(SEAL)

HAROLD D. MCCOY,
Secretary.