

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

REPORT NO. 3450
THE BALTIMORE AND OHIO RAILROAD COMPANY
AND
THE NEW YORK CENTRAL RAILROAD COMPANY
IN RE ACCIDENT
AT WALKERTON, IND., ON
FEBRUARY 7, 1952

SUMMARY

Date: February 7, 1952

Railroads: Baltimore and Ohio : New York Central

Location: Walkerton, Ind.

Kind of accident: Side collision

Equipment involved: Track motor-car : Freight train
1143 and two
trailers

Train number: : Extra 2800 West

Engine number: : 2800

Consist: : 65 cars, caboose

Estimated speeds: 4 m. p. h. : 39 m. p. h.

Operation: Interlocking

Tracks: Double; tangent; : Single; tangent;
level : 0.29 percent
ascending
grade westward

Weather: Clear

Time: 1:55 p. m.

Casualties: 2 killed; 2 injured

Cause: Failure of the Baltimore and Ohio
Railroad Company to provide adequate
protection for movement of track
motor-cars

Recommendation: That the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad
Company provide adequate protection
for movement of track motor-cars on
its line

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT NO. 3450

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

THE BALTIMORE AND OHIO RAILROAD COMPANY
AND
THE NEW YORK CENTRAL RAILROAD COMPANY

March 26, 1952

Accident at Walkerton, Ind., on February 7, 1952, caused
by failure of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company
to provide adequate protection for the movement of
a track motor-car.

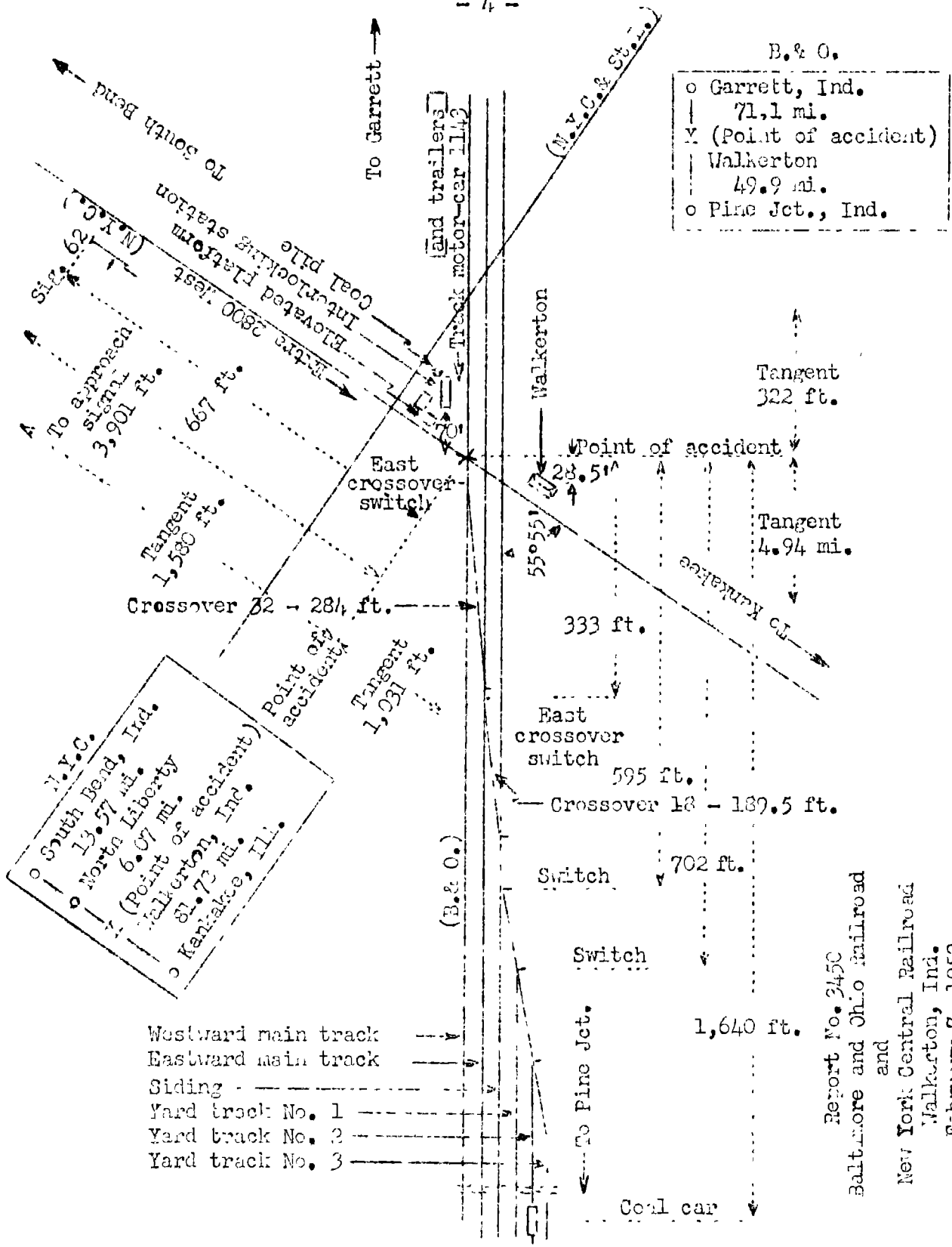
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On February 7, 1952, there was a side collision
between a track motor-car and trailers on the Baltimore
and Ohio Railroad and a freight train on the New York
Central Railroad at Walkerton, Ind., which resulted in
the death of two maintenance-of-way employees and the
injury of two maintenance-of-way employees.

1

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



- o Garrett, Ind. 71.1 mi.
- X (Point of accident)
- Walkerton 49.9 mi.
- o Pine Jct., Ind.

Tangent 322 ft.

Tangent 4.94 mi.

Point of accident

333 ft.

East crossover switch 595 ft.

Crossover 18 - 189.5 ft.

Switch 702 ft.

Switch 1,640 ft.

Crossover 22 - 28 1/2 ft.

Point of accident

Tangent 1,031 ft.

- Westward main track
- Eastward main track
- Siding
- Yard track No. 1
- Yard track No. 2
- Yard track No. 3

Report No. 345C
 Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and
 New York Central Railroad
 Walkerton, Ind.
 February 7, 1952

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred at the intersection of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, hereinafter referred to as the B. & O., and the New York Central Railroad, hereinafter referred to as the N.Y.C. An interlocking station at the crossing is designated as Walkerton by each carrier. The crossing is located on that part of the Chicago Division of the B. & O. extending between Garrett and Pine Jct., Ind., 121 miles, and on that part of the Western Division of the N.Y.C. extending between South Bend, Ind., and Kankakee, Ill., 101.42 miles. Walkerton is 71.1 miles west of Garrett and 19.64 miles west of South Bend. The tracks cross at an angle of 55°55'. In the vicinity of the point of accident the B. & O. is a double-track line, over which trains moving with the current of traffic are operated by signal indications. From the east there is a tangent 322 feet to the crossing and 4.94 miles westward. The grade for west-bound trains is practically level. The westward and eastward main tracks are designated, respectively, as track No. 1 and track No. 2. A siding is located south of the eastward main track and extends a considerable distance in either direction from the crossing. West of the crossing three yard tracks, designated as Nos. 1, 2 and 3, parallel the siding on the south. The east end of yard track No. 2 connects with yard track No. 1 at a switch located 702 feet west of the crossing. The east end of yard track No. 1 connects with the siding at a switch located 595 feet west of the crossing. Crossover 18, 189.5 feet in length, connects the siding with the eastward main track. The east crossover switch is located in the eastward main track 333 feet west of the crossing. Facing-point crossover 32, 284 feet in length, connects the two main tracks. The east switch is located in the westward main track 28.5 feet west of the crossing. Eastward from Walkerton the N.Y.C. is a single-track line, over which trains are operated by timetable, train orders and a manual-block system. In the vicinity of the point of accident this line extends from northeast to southwest; timetable directions are east and west and are used in this report. From the east there is a tangent 1,580 feet to the crossing and 1,031 feet westward. The grade for west-bound trains is 0.06 percent descending a considerable distance, and then 0.29 percent ascending 520 feet to the crossing and 1,380 feet westward.

Movements over the crossing are governed by interlocking signals. Westward approach signal and interlocking signal 62 are located, respectively, 3,201 feet and 667 feet east of the crossing. The interlocking machine is on the third floor of a three-story brick tower, located in the northeast angle of the intersection. This building is 50 feet long and 15 feet wide, and the west end is located 70 feet east of the crossing and 17.5 feet north of the center-line of the westward main track of the B. & O. A station, used by both carriers, is located south of the B. & O. tracks and in the southeast angle of the crossing.

Operating rules of the N.Y.C. read in part as follows:

14. Engine Whistle Signals.

Note.--The signals prescribed are illustrated by "o" for short sounds; "___" for longer sounds. * * *

Sound.	Indication.
* * *	
(1) ___ ___ o ___	(1) Approaching public crossings at grade.
* * *	
	(3) Approaching interlockings, * * * where * * * view is obscured by weather or other conditions.
* * *	

Instructions governing the Maintenance-of-Way Department of the B. & O. read in part as follows:

RULES FOR THE OPERATION OF TRACK CARS.

91. (a) A Track Car Operator must pass the required examination on the operating rules and physical characteristics of the territory on which he operates a track car and must have a Track Car Permit which will be displayed on demand.

* * *

93. Track Car Operators must secure Form 1069-D from Telegraph Operator for the movement of all track cars on all tracks controlled by the Train Dispatcher. The Train Dispatcher must be informed of the track car number, direction, points between which the track car is to move, and the length of time required to make the movement. * * *

Train Dispatcher will give Telegraph Operator complete line-up of movement of all trains * * *, number of line-up, track to which line-up applies and time it expires, and will record this information in book provided for that purpose. The Telegraph Operator will write the information as it is transmitted and repeat it to Train Dispatcher. * * * The Track Car Operator must read aloud to all persons on the track car the information received * * *

* * *

114. Track cars must not be pushed ahead of motor cars.

115. (a) When crossing over turnouts, interlocking plants, railroad crossings, * * * the power must be shut off. The car must be under control of the operator and run at a speed not exceeding five (5) miles per hour.

* * *

The maximum authorized speeds were 40 miles per hour for the freight train and 5 miles per hour for the track motor-car.

Description of Accident

B. & O. track motor-car 1143 in backward motion and pushing two trailers, occupied by an assistant track foreman and five maintenance-of-way employees, proceeded west-bound about 1:54 p. m. on the westward B. & O. main track from a point about 130 feet east of the crossing. While moving at a speed of about 4 miles per hour over the N.Y.C. crossing the track motor-car was struck by N.Y.C. Extra 2800 West.

Extra 2800 West, a west-bound N.Y.C. freight train, consisted of engine 2800, 65 cars and a caboose. This train passed North Liberty, 6.07 miles east of Walkerton and the last open office, at 1:48 p. m., passed signal 62, which indicated Proceed, and while moving at a speed of 39 miles per hour it struck track motor-car 1143.

The track motor-car was demolished, and the wreckage stopped between the two main tracks of the B. & O. at a point about 20 feet west of the crossing. Engine 2800 stopped 2,530 feet west of the crossing.

Two maintenance-of-way employees were killed. An assistant track foreman and one maintenance-of-way employee were injured.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 1:55 p. m.

Track motor-car 1143 was of the 4-wheel belt-drive type, was equipped with 4-wheel brakes, and was powered by an 8-15 horsepower gasoline motor. It weighed 1,045 pounds, had seating capacity for 8 persons, and was provided with safety rails at each end. The trailers were of the 4-wheel type, without brakes, and weighed about 700 pounds each. The track motor-car and trailers were coupled with standard motor-car couplers. The over-all length of the track motor-car and trailers coupled was 29 feet 3 inches. The track motor-car and trailers were insulated to prevent shunting of track circuits.

Discussion

On the day of the accident, an extra maintenance-of-way force and the regularly assigned section force at Walkerton were engaged in transporting coal from a freight car on yard track 2 to the station at Walkerton and to the interlocking tower, a distance of about 1,640 feet. A track motor-car and two trailers were being used for this purpose. Movements to the station were made over yard track 3 to the siding and thence to the station. Movements to the interlocking tower were made over yard track 3 to the siding, through crossover 18 to the eastward main track, through crossover 32 to the westward main track and thence to the interlocking tower. Immediately west of the station and interlocking tower the N.Y.C. track crosses the B. & O. main tracks and the siding.

About 8 a. m. the section foreman communicated by telephone with the operator at the tower to arrange for the operator to provide protection by retaining interlocking signals in stop position for the track motor-car and trailers while occupying the B. & O. main tracks. The operator advised the section foreman that if crossovers 18 and 32 were lined for movement of the track motor-car from the siding to the

westward main track, it would be permissible for the track motor-car to occupy the main tracks and that protection against B. & O. trains would be provided. No arrangement was made with the operator to provide the same protection against N.Y.C. trains while the track motor-car and trailers were moving over the crossing, and no information concerning the movements of trains on either line was obtained. During the forenoon several movements were made from yard track 2 either to the station or to the tower. The first movement during the afternoon was made from yard track 2 to the tower, and the coal was unloaded immediately east of the tower about 1:50 p. m. The extra gang foreman then instructed an assistant foreman and five employees to proceed with the track motor-car and trailers to yard track 2 for another load of coal. The extra gang foreman then proceeded to the third floor of the tower. At that time the regularly assigned section foreman was in the tower. The assistant foreman and the five employees then boarded the track motor-car and proceeded westward. The track motor-car operator was seated on the north side of the car, on the front end with respect to the direction of the movement of the car, and was facing eastward. There was a strong wind from the south and none of the surviving employees heard the approaching train, except that one of them heard the engine whistle sounded at a distance of about 100 feet. The view of the N.Y.C. track from the track motor-car was obstructed by the tower and by a freight station located east of the crossing and adjacent to the N.Y.C. track, until the leading trailer was in the immediate vicinity of the crossing. When the track motor-car operator first observed the approaching train at a distance of about 100 feet, the leading trailer was on the crossing, and he could not then take any action to prevent a collision.

N.Y.C. Extra 2800 West approached the crossing at a speed of 39 miles per hour. The engineer, the fireman and the front brakeman were in the cab of the engine. The approach signal and interlocking signal 62 each indicated Proceed. None of the members of the crew had information that a track motor-car was being operated over the crossing at Walkerton. The engineer started to sound the grade-crossing signal about 700 feet east of the crossing, and this signal was continued until after the collision occurred. The engineer could not see the track motor-car and trailers from the right side of the cab and, because of an elevated platform adjacent to and east of the N.Y.C. track, the fireman did not see the track motor-car and trailers until the engine was about 25 feet from the crossing.

The investigation disclosed that the track motor-car operator had no knowledge of the arrangement made by the section foreman with the operator to provide protection against B. & O. trains. He had not been examined on the rules governing the operation of track motor-cars, and had not been qualified as a track motor-car operator. The assistant foreman was too seriously injured to be questioned during the investigation. He had been qualified as a track motor-car operator. The movements of the track motor-car and trailers on the main tracks of the B. & O. were made without information concerning the movements of trains, although such is required by the rules. Protection against N.Y.C. trains was not provided for movements over the crossing, and the track motor-car and trailers were not under control while approaching the crossing, as required by the rules. The investigation also disclosed that coal was supplied to the station and tower two or three times each year by use of a track motor-car and trailers and that such previous movements were made in the same manner as on the day of the accident. This method of operation does not provide adequate protection for the movements of track motor-cars.

Since January 1, 1944, the Commission has investigated 57 collisions, including the present case, which were caused by failure to provide adequate protection for the movement of track motor-cars. These accidents resulted in the death of 70 persons and the injury of 121 persons. In the reports of these accidents the Commission repeatedly has recommended that the carrier involved should provide adequate protection for the movements of track motor-cars on its line.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company to provide adequate protection for the movement of a track motor-car.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company provide adequate protection for the movement of track motor-cars on its line.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-sixth day of March, 1952.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,

Secretary.