

RAILROAD ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

Report No 3790

CHICAGO, BURLINGTON & QUINCY RAILROAD COMPANY

ASHLAND, NEBR.

OCTOBER 11, 1957

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

Washington

SUMMARY

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DATE	October 11, 1957	
RAILROAD	Chicago, Burlington & Quincy	
LOCATION	Ashland, Nebr.	
KIND OF ACCIDENT	Collision	
EQUIPMENT INVOLVED	Locomotive with cars	Freight train
TRAIN NUMBER		83
LOCOMOTIVE NUMBERS	Diesel-electric unit 289	Diesel-electric units 405 and 278
CONSISTS	18 cars	66 cars, caboose
ESTIMATED SPEEDS	Standing	15 m. p. h.
OPERATION	Timetable, train orders, and manual block-signal system, yard limits	
TRACK	Single, tangent, level	
WEATHER	Cloudy	
TIME	6:05 p.m.	
CASUALTIES:	1 killed, 5 injured	
CAUSE	Failure properly to control speed of second-class train moving within yard limits	

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT NO 3790

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

CHICAGO, BURLINGTON & QUINCY RAILROAD COMPANY

June 2, 1958

Accident at Ashland, Nebr , on October 11 1957, caused by failure properly to control the speed of a second-class train moving within yard limits

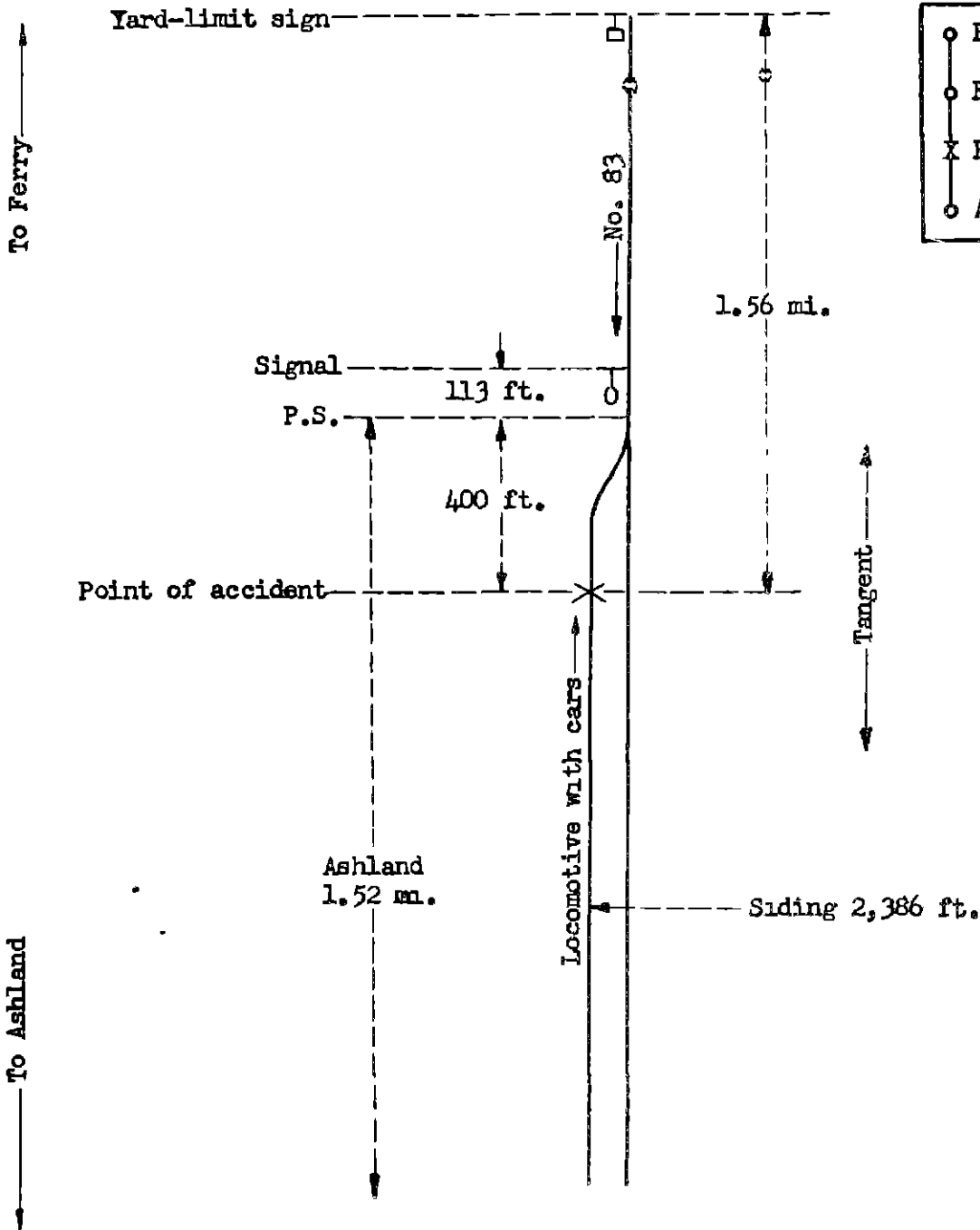
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

TUGGLE, Commissioner

On October 11, 1957, there was a collision between a locomotive with cars and a freight train on the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad, which resulted in the death of one train-service employee, and the injury of five train-service employees

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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.



- Ferry, Nebr. 75.28 mi.
- Fremont 27.78 mi.
- X Point of accident 1.44 mi.
- Ashland, Nebr.

Chicago, Burlington & Quiney Railroad
 Ashland, Nebr.
 October 11, 1957

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Omaha Division extending between Ferry and Ashland, Nebr., 104.50 miles, a single-track line over which trains are operated by timetable, train orders and a manual block-signal system for following movements. Within yard limits at Ashland a siding 2,386 feet in length parallels the main track on the west. The north switch of the siding is located 1.52 miles north of the station. The accident occurred on the siding at a point 400 feet south of the north siding-switch and 1.56 miles south of the north yard-limit sign. The main track is tangent throughout a considerable distance north and south of the north siding-switch. In the vicinity of the point of accident the grade is level.

The north end of the siding is provided with a No. 11 turnout. The switch stand is of the high-stand type and is located 7 feet west of the west rail of the main track. It is provided with a red banner 36 inches long and 8 inches high, and with reflector units 5 inches in diameter at the top of the spindle. When the switch is lined for movements on the main track the banner is parallel to the track and green reflector units are displayed in the direction of approaching trains. When the switch is lined for entry to the siding the banner is at right angles to the track and red reflector units are displayed in the direction of approaching trains.

A single-aspect signal, governing southbound movements on the main track, is located 113 feet north of the north siding-switch. This signal is of the color-light type. It is approach lighted and displays only a yellow aspect indicating Approach-next-signal-prepared-to-stop. This signal is the advance signal for entry to a centralized traffic control system at Ashland which begins at a point south of the south siding-switch. The aspect of the signal is not affected either by occupancy of the section of track south of the signal or by the position of the switches of the siding.

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

DEFINITIONS

REDUCED SPEED --Proceed prepared to stop short of train, obstruction, or anything that may require the speed of a train to be reduced.

OPERATING RULES

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Second class, extra trains and engines must move within yard limits at Reduced Speed unless the main track is known to be clear.

CLEAR INDICATION OF BLOCK SIGNALS DOES NOT MODIFY THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS RULE.

* * *

The maximum authorized speed for freight trains is 45 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

Extra 289 East, an eastbound freight train hauled by diesel-electric unit 289, originated on the Lincoln Division. This train arrived at Ashland at 4 05 p. m. The locomotive was detached at that point to perform switching operations. The locomotive, headed south, entered the siding at Ashland at the north switch about 5 50 p. m. and was coupled to a cut of cars. Several minutes later, while the locomotive coupled to a cut of 18 cars was standing on the siding, the north end of the locomotive was struck by No. 83.

No. 83, a southbound second-class freight train, consisted of diesel-electric units 405 and 278, coupled in multiple-unit control, 66 cars, and a caboose. This train departed from Fremont, 27.78 miles north of the point of accident, the last open office, at 5 20 p. m., 2 hours 58 minutes late, entered the siding at Ashland at the north switch, and while moving at an estimated speed of 15 miles per hour it struck the north end of the locomotive and the cut of cars standing on the siding.

Diesel-electric unit 289 and the first car of the cut of cars were derailed. The underframe of this diesel-electric unit mounted the underframe of the first car and demolished the superstructure. The diesel-electric unit, and the first and second cars of the cut of cars were heavily damaged. The first diesel-electric unit, the first to the seventh cars, inclusive, and the front truck of the eighth car of No. 83 were derailed. The first diesel-electric unit stopped upright and in line with the track, and the derailed cars stopped on or near the track structure. The first diesel-electric unit, and the first to the sixth cars, inclusive, were heavily damaged. The second diesel-electric unit, and the seventh and eighth cars were somewhat damaged.

The front brakeman of the crew of locomotive 289 was killed by derailling equipment. The engineer and the fireman of the crew of locomotive 289 and the conductor, the front brakeman, and the flagman of No. 83 were injured.

The weather was cloudy and it was dusk at the time of the accident, which occurred about 6 05 p. m.

Diesel-electric units 289, 405, and 278 are of the road switcher type.

Discussion

When Extra 289 East arrived at Ashland at 4 05 p. m. on the day of the accident, the conductor received instructions from the operator at that point regarding switching operations to be performed in the vicinity of the station and on the siding. The crew then proceeded to perform switching operations in the vicinity of the station. At 4 50 p. m. the flagman inquired about the location of No. 83 from the train dispatcher and was informed that No. 83 was expected to pass the siding about 6 00 p. m. Shortly after, the conductor proceeded to the station to prepare required reports. After 10 cars were assembled for movement to the siding, the flagman informed the operator that they were ready to move to the siding. The operator informed the train dispatcher who then lined the route for movement on the main track to the north limit of the centralized traffic control territory. The conductor said that he was aware that No. 83 was expected to pass the siding about 6 00 p. m. He said he thought that there would not be sufficient time to make the switching movement without delaying No. 83 but that since the train dispatcher lined the route

for the movement he took no exception. The conductor remained at the station when the locomotive, headed south and pushing 10 cars, proceeded northward on the main track. The locomotive was being operated by the fireman under the supervision of the engineer. The fireman said that the headlight at each end of the locomotive was lighted dimly. After placing the 10 cars on the south end of the siding the locomotive proceeded northward on the main track and entered the siding at the north siding-switch about 5:50 p. m. The flagman said that the north siding-switch was left open to permit movements to be made to and from the main track. The locomotive was coupled to 14 cars standing on the siding. The flagman said that he coupled the air hose on these cars and met the front brakeman about 100 feet south of the locomotive on the west side of the cut. He said that before he proceeded southward he observed the headlight of No. 83 approaching. He was uncertain whether or not he called this to the front brakeman's attention. He said he expected that the front brakeman would line the switch for movement of No. 83 on the main track. The locomotive and 14 cars were moved southward and were coupled to other cars standing on the siding. A cut was then made at the south end of approximately the 18th car and the locomotive and cut of cars were moved northward and stopped with the north end of the locomotive 400 feet south of the north siding-switch. The fireman said that shortly after the movement stopped he observed the headlight of No. 83 approaching. He called a warning to the front brakeman. He said that the front brakeman ran toward the switch giving stop signals. The collision occurred immediately afterward. The fireman said that neither he nor the front brakeman were aware that No. 83 was expected to pass the siding about 6:00 p. m.

As No. 83 was approaching the point where the accident occurred the enginemen and the front brakeman were in their respective positions in the control compartment of the first diesel-electric unit, and the conductor and the flagman were in the caboose. The brakes of this train had been tested and had functioned properly when used en route. The headlight was lighted brightly. The engineer said that as No. 83 was approaching the north yard-limit sign at Ashland he reduced the speed of the train to about 35 miles per hour. He said he observed that the single-aspect signal near the north siding-switch displayed a yellow aspect. When No. 83 was approximately 1,200 feet north of the siding the engineer observed that the north siding-switch was lined for movement to the siding. He immediately initiated an emergency application of the brakes. Both the engineer and the fireman then observed the front brakeman giving stop signals. They said that they did not observe a lighted headlight. The engineer said that the train was moving at a speed of 15 miles per hour as indicated by the speed-indicating device when the collision occurred.

The engineer of No. 83 said he was aware that the aspect displayed by the single-aspect signal did not indicate the condition of track occupancy or the position of the siding switches. He said he understood that he was required to operate the train within yard limits in such manner that it could be stopped short of anything requiring the speed of the train to be reduced including a switch not properly lined.

Cause

This accident was caused by failure properly to control the speed of a second-class train moving within yard limits.

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Dated at Washington, D C , this second
day of June, 1958

By the Commission, Commissioner Tuggle

(SEAL)

HAROLD D McCOY,

Secretary