

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 3060

CHICAGO, MILWAUKEE, ST. PAUL AND PACIFIC
RAILROAD COMPANY

REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT

NEAR CEDAR FALLS, WASH., ON

JANUARY 10, 1947

SUMMARY

Railroad: Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul
and Pacific

Date: January 10, 1947

Location: Cedar Falls, Wash.

Kind of accident: Head-end collision

Equipment involved: Track motor-cars : Freight train
and trailers

Train number: : Extra 1277 West

Engine number: : 1277

Consists: Motor-car, 3 trailers, : 1 car, caboose
motor-car, 5
trailers, coupled

Estimated speeds: Standing : 25 m. p. h.

Operation: Timetable, train
orders and automatic
block-signal system

Track: Single; 4° curve; 0.64 percent
descending grade westward

Weather: Raining

Time: 10:05 a. m.

Casualties: 4 killed; 4 injured

Cause: Failure to provide adequate protection
for movement of track motor-cars

Recommendation: That the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Pa
and Pacific Railroad Company provide
adequate block-signal or train-order
protection for the movement of track
motor-cars on its line

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 3060

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

CHICAGO, MILWAUKEE, ST. PAUL AND PACIFIC
RAILROAD COMPANY

February 28, 1947

Accident near Cedar Falls, Wash., on January 10, 1947,
caused by failure to provide adequate protection
for the movement of track motor-cars.

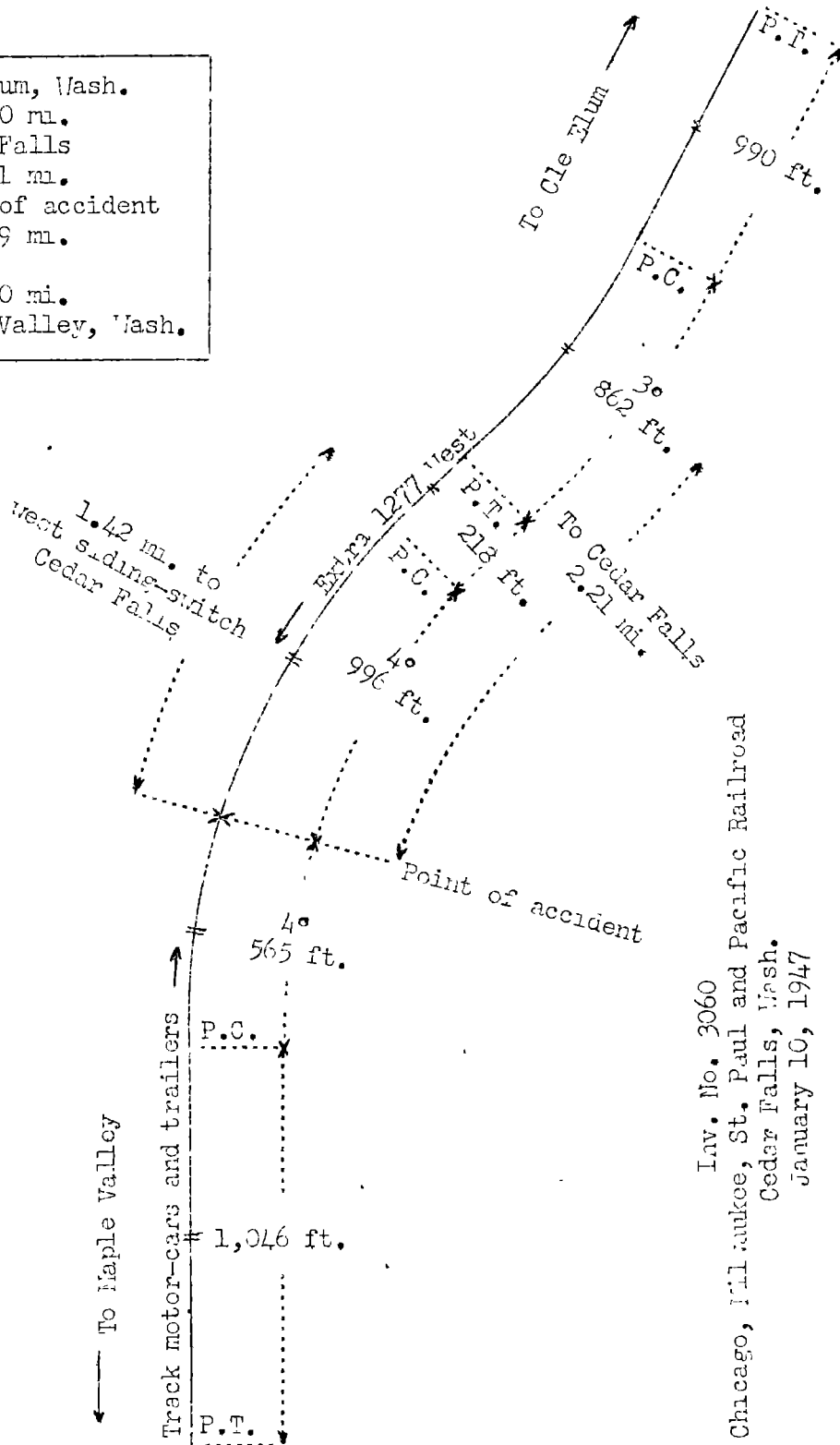
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On January 10, 1947, there was a head-end collision between an assembly of track motor-cars and trailers and a freight train on the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad near Cedar Falls, Wash., which resulted in the death of four employees and the injury of four employees. This accident was investigated in conjunction with a representative of the Department of Labor and Industry of the State of Washington,

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

o	Cle Elum, Wash.	50.80 mi.
o	Cedar Falls	2.21 mi.
X	Point of accident	11.39 mi.
o	Noble	3.40 mi.
o	Maple Valley, Wash.	



Inv. No. 3060
 Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad
 Cedar Falls, Wash.
 January 10, 1947

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Coast Division extending between Cle Elum and Maple Valley, Wash., 67.8 miles, a single-track line, equipped with an overhead catenary system for the electric propulsion of trains, over which trains are operated by timetable, train orders and an automatic block-signal system. At Cedar Falls, 50.8 miles west of Cle Elum, a siding 1.12 miles in length parallels the main track on the north. The west switch of this siding is 4,153 feet west of the station. The accident occurred on the main track 1.42 miles west of the west siding-switch. From the east there are, in succession a tangent 990 feet in length, a 3° curve to the right 862 feet, a tangent 218 feet and a 4° curve to the left 996 feet to the point of accident and 565 feet westward. From the west there is a tangent 1,046 feet in length, which is followed by the curve on which the accident occurred. The grade is 0.64 percent descending westward.

Maintenance-of-Way Rules and Instructions read in part as follows;

409. The following minimum signal equipment must be on each * * * motor track car * * * for use in the protection of track car movements;

DAYS * * *

- 2 red flags
- 4 fusees
- 8 torpedoes

* * *

411. Before starting, there must be a thorough understanding as to what part each employe is to take should an emergency arise * * *

414. Employes operating track cars on main tracks shall, when practicable, obtain information in writing regarding trains, but such information will not relieve them of the responsibility of protecting the cars. They must see that the cars are clear of the track for trains.

The person receiving the information must repeat it to the one from whom it is received and must read it aloud to all persons on the car,

* * *

The information on train location should be written on the prescribed form.

415. In using track cars, employes must always remember that trains may be expected from either direction.

425. Where the view is obscured and during stormy or foggy weather * * * special precautions must be taken for protection when operating track cars and when necessary the movement must be protected by stop signals.

426. When a heavily loaded track car is used on the main track under circumstances in which it may be struck by a train or engine, the foreman must take such action as necessary to insure full protection.

* * *

436. When riding track cars, a constant lookout must be kept at all times for approaching trains * * *

437. Permissible speed for motor track cars:

* * *

10 miles per hour * * * during stormy or foggy weather, around curves, * * *

438. Motor track cars with push cars or trailers attached must not exceed a speed of 15 miles per hour on tangent track. * * *

445. When there are other employes on the car, the operator of a track car must at all times face the direction in which the car is moving and the foreman will see to it that a constant lookout is kept in both directions. * * *

The maximum authorized speed for freight trains is 40 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

About 9:05 a. m. an assembly of maintenance-of-way equipment consisting of one track motor-car, three trailers, one track motor-car and five trailers, coupled and in the order named, en route eastward to Cedar Falls, departed from Noble, a non-office station, 13.6 miles west of Cedar Falls, and about 1 hour later, immediately after this movement had stopped on the main track at a point 1.42 miles west of the west siding-switch at Cedar Falls, it was struck by Extra 1277 West.

Extra 1277 West, a west-bound freight train, consisting of steam engine 1277, one car and a caboose, departed from Cedar Falls, the last open office, at 10 a. m., and while moving at an estimated speed of 25 miles per hour it collided with the track motor-cars.

The track motor-cars and the trailers were demolished. The pilot of the engine of Extra 1277 West was damaged.

The 4 employees killed and the 4 employees injured were maintenance-of-way employees. These employees were occupants of the track motor-cars and trailers.

It was raining at the time of the accident, which occurred about 10:05 a. m.

According to data furnished by the railroad the motor-cars were of the 4-wheel type, and 9 feet 5 inches in length. Each motor-car weighed 2,025 pounds, and was powered by an 85-horsepower gasoline motor.

Discussion

The investigation disclosed that a maintenance-of-way extra gang at Noble, 13.6 miles west of Cedar Falls, was instructed to proceed by track motor-cars and trailers to Cedar Falls, thence to a point about 30 miles beyond Cedar Falls to perform track work. About 8 a. m. the train dispatcher issued by telephone, to the general foreman of the extra gang, information regarding train movements in this territory. This line-up included the information that Extra 1277 West was expected to depart from Cedar Falls about 11 a. m.. About 8:45 a. m. the conductor of Extra 66 East informed the foreman that his train was authorized by train order to proceed from Noble to Cedar Falls to meet Extra 1277 West. The foreman instructed an assistant foreman to arrange for one of the members of the extra gang to proceed to Cedar Falls on Extra 66 East, then to hold opposing trains east of the west siding-switch at Cedar Falls until the track motor-cars and trailers were into clear on the siding. Extra 66 East departed from Noble about 9 a. m.; and the track motor-cars and trailers departed about 5 minutes later. The member of the extra gang who proceeded to Cedar Falls on Extra 66 East said he understood that on his arrival at Cedar Falls he was to consult with another foreman for further instructions. He took no action on his arrival at Cedar Falls to hold west-bound trains at that point, because he did not understand that he was to do so. Extra 1277 West departed from Cedar Falls about 10 a. m., immediately after the arrival of Extra 66 East, and Extra 1277 West collided with the track motor-cars about 2.2 miles west of the station at Cedar Falls. The two motor-cars and the eight trailers were coupled, and were occupied by a foreman, 2 assistant foremen and 11 laborers. The cars were moving on a 4° curve to the right at

a speed of about 8 miles per hour when the occupants first saw Extra 1277 West approaching a few hundred feet distant. The motor-cars and trailers had just been stopped when the collision occurred.

As Extra 1277 West was approaching the point where the accident occurred the speed was about 25 miles per hour, in territory where the maximum authorized speed was 40 miles per hour. No train order restricting the movement of Extra 1277 West with respect to the motor-cars involved had been issued, and the crew of this train was not informed that the motor-cars were moving in this territory. The enginemen were maintaining a lookout ahead, and the first these employees knew of the movement of the motor-cars was when the fireman saw the first motor-car about 200 feet distant. The fireman called a warning to the engineer, who immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position. The collision occurred before the speed of the train was materially reduced. The brakes of this train had been tested and had functioned properly en route.

Because of an embankment on the inside of the curve on which the accident occurred, the view of the point of accident from either direction was restricted to a distance of about 200 feet.

Track motor-cars move in this territory on the authority of an oral line-up. Train crews are not given information about line-ups issued to motor-car operators. The rules governing the operation of track motor-cars provide that operators of motor-cars must maintain a lookout to the front and rear of moving motor-cars, and flag protection must be provided before a motor-car is permitted to move around curves where the view of the track is obscured. Motor-cars and trailers are insulated to prevent actuation of automatic block signals. The motor-cars and trailers involved were being operated on the curve on which the accident occurred, without flag protection, because the foreman in charge of the motor-cars thought opposing trains were being held at Cedar Falls, but the employee who was sent to that point to hold west-bound trains did not so understand the instructions given him.

In addition to the present accident, during the past three years the Commission has investigated twelve collisions between trains and track motor-cars. These accidents resulted in the death of 27 persons and the injury of 21, and were caused by failure to provide adequate protection for the movement of track motor-cars. In the instant case, the members of the crew of Extra 1277 West were not informed by train order as to the location of the opposing track motor-cars, and flag protection was not provided for the track motor-cars. If adequate train-order protection had been provided for the movement of the track motor-cars, this accident might have been prevented. If proper block

protection had been provided, neither the track motor-cars nor the opposing train would have been permitted to enter a block occupied by an opposing movement.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure to provide adequate protection for the movement of track motor-cars.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad Company provide adequate block-signal or train-order protection for the movement of track motor-cars on its line.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-eighth day of February, 1947.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.