

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

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INVESTIGATION NO. 3165  
CHICAGO, MILWAUKEE, ST. PAUL AND PACIFIC  
RAILROAD COMPANY  
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT  
AT STURTEVANT, WIS., ON  
FEBRUARY 11, 1948

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SUMMARY

Railroad: Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul  
and Pacific

Date: February 11, 1948

Location: Sturtevant, Wis.

Kind of accident: Head-end collision

Equipment involved: Engine : Freight train

Train number: : Extra 44 East

Engine numbers: 1528 : Diesel-electric  
44

Consist: : 42 cars, caboose

Speed: Standing : 33 m. p. h.

Operation: Interlocking

Track: Double; tangent; 0.15 percent  
descending grade westward

Weather: Clear

Time: 7:43 a. m.

Casualties: 1 killed; 1 injured

Cause: Failure to obey interlocking signal  
indication

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 3165

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

March 26, 1948

Accident at Sturtevant, Wis., on February 11, 1948,  
caused by failure to obey an interlocking  
signal indication.

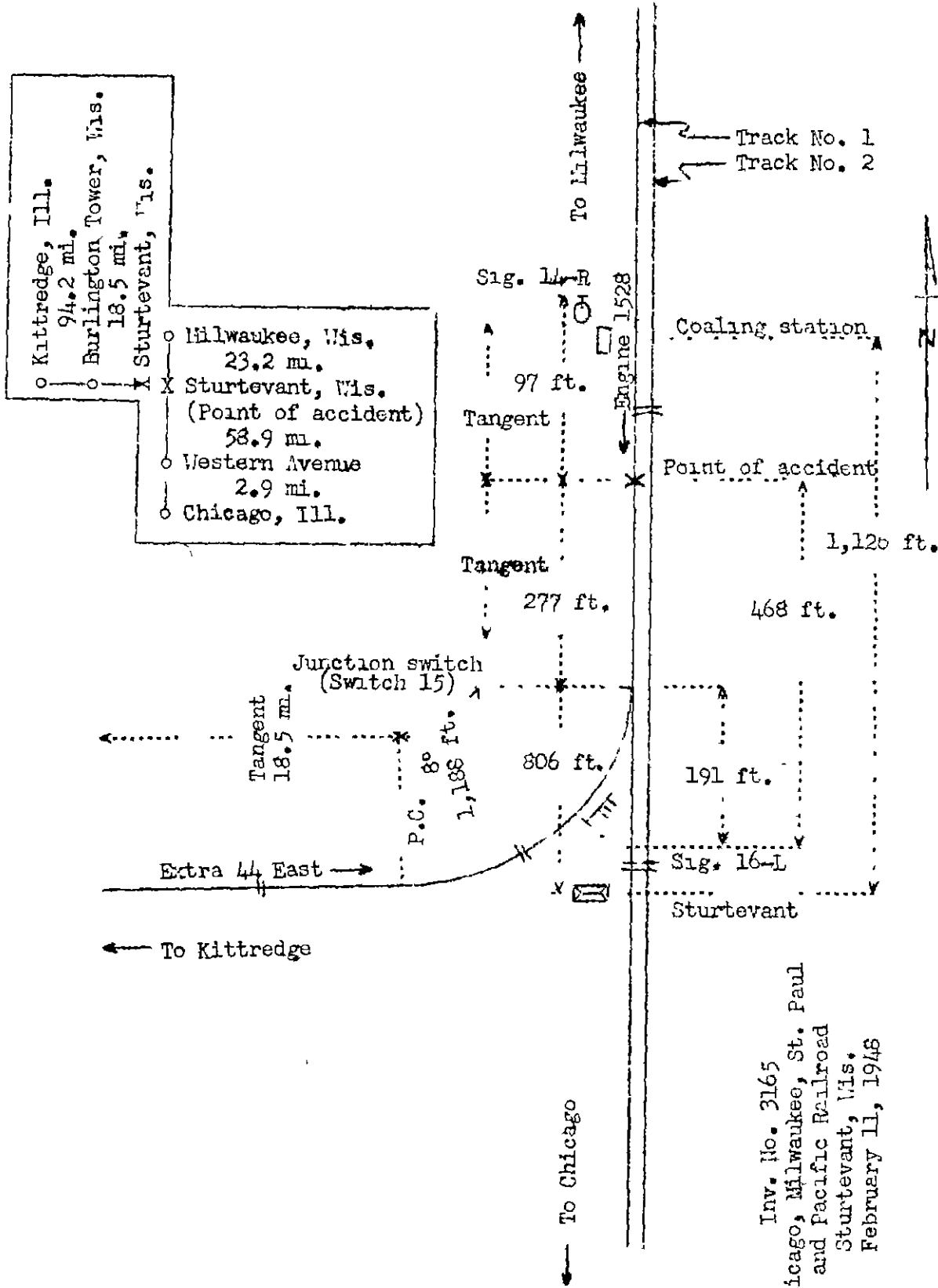
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION<sup>1</sup>

PATTERSON, Commissioner.

On February 11, 1948, there was a head-end collision between an engine and a freight train on the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad at Sturtevant, Wis., which resulted in the death of one employee, and the injury of one employee. This accident was investigated in conjunction with a representative of the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin.

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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 Patterson for consideration and disposition.



Inv. No. 3165  
 Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul  
 and Pacific Railroad  
 Sturtevant, Wis.  
 February 11, 1948

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Milwaukee Division extending between Milwaukee, Wis., and Western Avenue, Chicago, Ill., 82.1 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a double-track line over which trains moving in both directions on either track are operated by signal indications. From east to west, according to compass directions, the main tracks are designated as tracks Nos. 2 and 1. Within interlocking limits at Sturtevant, 23.2 miles east of Milwaukee, a single-track line extending between Sturtevant and Kittredge, Ill., 112.7 miles, connects with track No. 1 at a point 806 feet west of the station. The junction switch is designated as switch 15. On the single-track line, trains are operated by timetable, train orders and a manual-block system. The double-track line extends north and south, and the single-track line extends east and west. Timetable directions on both lines are eastward and westward. Timetable directions are used hereafter in this report. The accident occurred within interlocking limits on track No. 1, at a point 277 feet west of switch 15. Track No. 1 is tangent throughout a considerable distance immediately west of the point of accident and some distance eastward. From the west on the single-track line there is a tangent 18.5 miles in length, and then an 8° curve to the left 1,188 feet to switch 15. At the point of accident the grade is 0.15 percent descending westward.

Home signal 14-R, governing east-bound movements on track No. 1, is 97 feet west of the point of accident. Home signal 16-L, governing movements from the single-track line through switch 15 to track No. 1, is 191 feet west of switch 15, and is of the three-arm, upper-quadrant, semaphore type. The involved day aspect and corresponding indication and name of signal 16-L are as follows:

<u>Aspect</u>	<u>Indication</u>	<u>Name</u>
Horizontal- over-horizontal- over-horizontal	Stop.	Stop signal.

Signal 16-L and switch 15 are controlled from the interlocking machine in the station at Sturtevant. The normal indication displayed by signal 16-L is stop. The normal position of switch 15 is for movement on track No. 1.

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

DEFINITIONS.

\* \* \*

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

98. Trains must approach \* \* \* junctions, \* \* \* prepared to stop, unless the switches are properly lined, signals indicate proceed, and track is clear. \* \* \*

663. When a train or engine is stopped by an interlocking Stop-indication, it may proceed at restricted speed after receiving a hand signal from the signalman, \* \* \*

Description of Accident

Engine 1528, headed east and moving eastward, stopped about 7:40 a. m. within interlocking limits on track No. 1 at Sturtevant to supply the tender with coal from a coaling station, located immediately south of track No. 1 and 1,126 feet west of the passenger station. About 3 minutes later the engine was struck by Extra 44 East.

Extra 44 East, an east-bound freight train en route from Kittredge to Sturtevant, consisting of Diesel-electric engine 44, a two-unit type, 42 cars and a caboose, passed Burlington Tower, 18.5 miles west of Sturtevant, at 7:13 a. m., passed signal 16-L, which displayed stop, ran through switch 15, which was in normal position, and while moving westward on track No. 1 at a speed of 33 miles per hour, as indicated by the tape of the speed recorder, it collided with engine 1528.

The front driving wheels of engine 1528 were derailed, and this engine and the engine of Extra 44 East stopped 1,573 feet west of the point of collision. Engine 1528 and the first unit of the engine of Extra 44 East were badly damaged. The second unit of the engine of Extra 44 East and the first four cars were slightly damaged. The front pair of wheels of the front truck of the seventh car of Extra 44 East was derailed.

The fireman of engine 1528 was killed, and the engineer of this engine was injured.

The weather was clear and it was daylight at the time of the accident, which occurred at 7:43 a. m.

#### Discussion

Engine 1528, headed east and en route eastward on track No. 1, stopped about 7:40 a. m. within interlocking limits at the coaling station at Sturtevant. Switch 15 was lined for engine 1528 to proceed eastward on track No. 1. Signal 16-L, governing movements from the single-track line through switch 15 to track No. 1, displayed stop. About 3 minutes after engine 1528 stopped at the coaling station, Extra 44 East passed signal 16-L and ran through switch 15. This train proceeded westward on track No. 1 and was moving at a speed of 33 miles per hour when it struck engine 1528 at a point 468 feet west of signal 16-L and 277 feet west of switch 15.

The crew of engine 1528 consisted of the engineer and the fireman. The fireman was killed, and the engineer was so seriously injured that he could not be questioned during the investigation.

As Extra 44 East was approaching Sturtevant the engineer and the front brakeman were in the control compartment at the front of the first Diesel-electric unit, the fireman was working in the engine compartment, and the conductor and the flagman were in the caboose. The engineer said that soon after the engine passed a point about 1 mile west of switch 15 he became drowsy and was not aware of the speed of the train or its location until the engine was in the immediate vicinity of signal 16-L. Then he awakened and immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position, but the engine entered track No. 1 and the collision occurred before the train could be stopped. Because the speed was excessive the fireman reentered the control compartment to warn the engineer, but the brakes were applied in emergency just as he was entering the compartment. The front brakeman said that he was consulting his timetable, and was not aware of anything being wrong until his engine entered track No. 1. The conductor and the flagman said that when the caboose was about 3,500 feet west of switch 15 they observed that the speed was excessive and the conductor opened the emergency valve on the caboose, but this action was not taken soon enough to prevent the collision. The brakes of Extra 44 East had functioned properly en route.

The stop indication displayed by signal 16-L required Extra 44 East to stop short of that signal and not to proceed until an indication permitting the train to proceed was displayed or proper authority from the leverman had been received.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure to obey an interlocking signal indication.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-sixth day of March, 1948.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,  
Secretary.