

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON

REPORT NO. 3708

CHICAGO, MILWAUKEE, ST. PAUL AND PACIFIC
RAILROAD COMPANY

IN RE ACCIDENT

AT RED WING, MINN., ON

SEPTEMBER 26, 1956

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SUMMARY

Date: September 26, 1956

Railroad: Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific

Location: Red Wing, Minn.

Kind of accident: Collision

Equipment involved: Track motor-car : Freight train
7479 with two
trailers

Train number: : Extra 2484 West

Locomotive number: : Diesel-electric
unit 2484

Consist: : 1 Diesel-electric
unit in tow,
1 car, caboose

Speeds: Standing : 46 m. p. h.

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

Tracks: Double; tangent; 0.20 percent descending
grade westward

Weather: Clear

Time: 4:55 p. m.

Casualties: 1 killed; 1 injured

Cause: Unauthorized use of track motor-car

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT NO. 3708

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

November 16, 1956

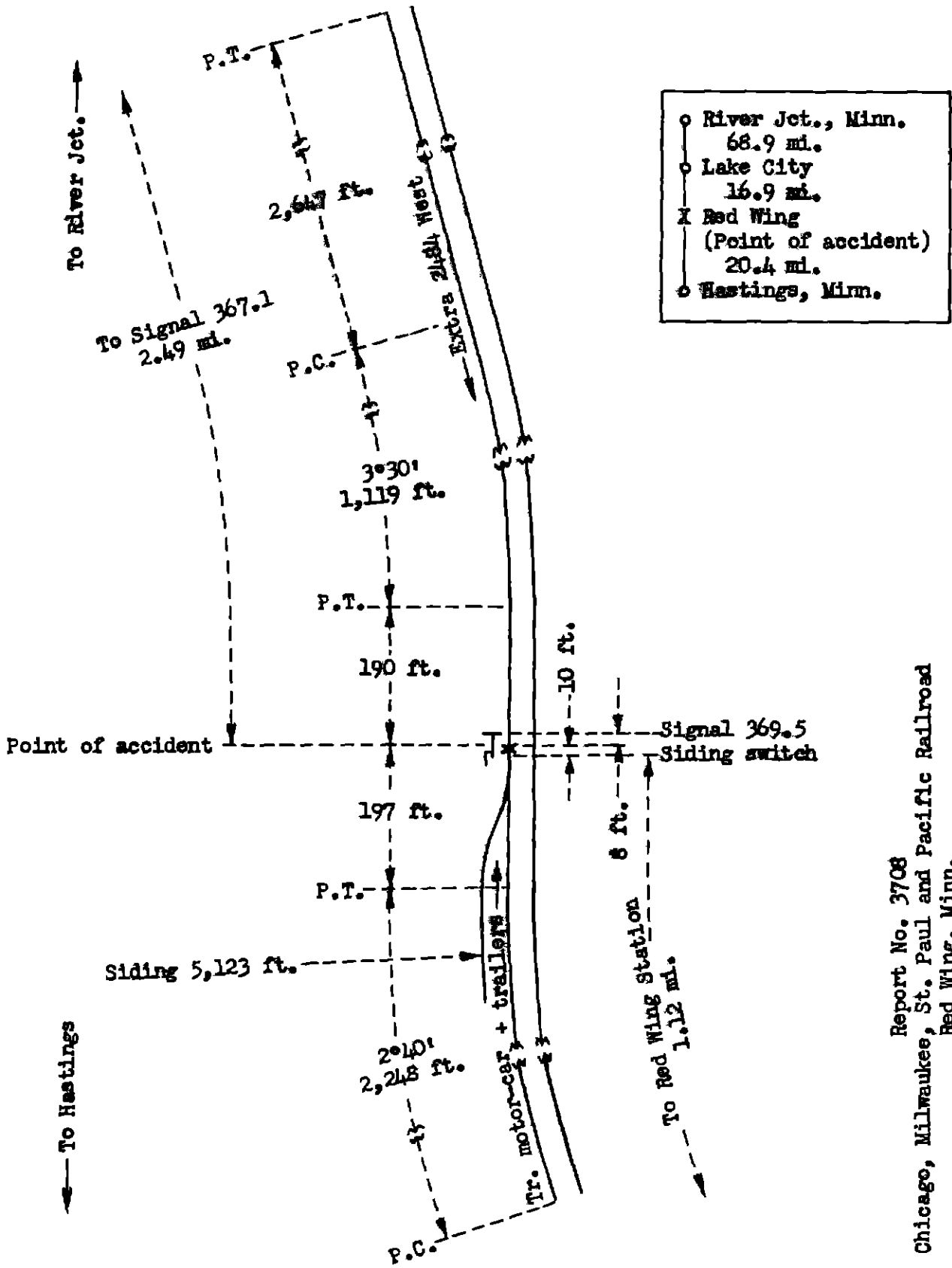
Accident at Red Wing, Minn., on September 26, 1956, caused
by the unauthorized use of a track motor-car.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

CLARKE, Commissioner:

On September 26, 1956, there was a collision between a track motor-car with two trailers and a freight train on the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad at Red Wing, Minn., which resulted in the death of one maintenance-of-way employee not on duty, and the injury of one maintenance-of-way employee not on duty.

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.



Report No. 3708
 Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad
 Red Wing, Minn.
 September 26, 1956

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the La Crosse and River Division extending between River Jct. and Hastings, Minn., 106.2 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a double-track line, over which trains moving with the current of traffic are operated by timetable, train orders, and an automatic block-signal and cab-signal system. At Red Wing, 85.8 miles west of River Jct., a westward siding 5,123 feet in length parallels the westward main track on the north. The east siding-switch is 1.12 miles east of the station. The accident occurred on the westward main track within yard limits at a point 10 feet east of the east siding-switch. From the east there are, in succession, a tangent 2,647 feet in length, a 3°30' curve to the right 1,119 feet, and a tangent 190 feet to the point of accident and 197 feet westward. From the west there is a 2°40' curve to the right 2,248 feet in length and the tangent on which the accident occurred. The grade is 0.20 percent descending westward at the point of accident.

Automatic signals 367.1 and 369.5, governing west-bound movements on the westward main track, are located, respectively, 2.49 miles and 8 feet east of the point of accident.

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.

93. * * *

Within yard limits second and inferior class, extra trains and engines must move at restricted speed.

* * *

Rules for the operation of track motor-cars read in part as follows:

401. Track cars will be in charge of employes who are qualified.

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.

* * *

461. * * * When not in service, track cars that are left outdoors must be secured with lock and chain.

The maximum authorized speed for freight trains is 60 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

About 4:20 p. m. track motor-car 7479 with two trailers entered the westward main track at the east switch of the westward siding at Red Wing. The trailers were coupled to the west end of the track motor-car. The car was occupied by two camp attendants. Neither of these employees was on duty. The track motor-car proceeded to the station at Red Wing and remained at that point several minutes while camp supplies were loaded on the trailers. It then proceeded eastward on the westward main track and stopped about 1,500 feet west of the east switch of the westward siding. After the supplies were unloaded it again proceeded eastward and stopped at a point 10 feet east of the switch. Several seconds later it was struck by Extra 2484 West.

Extra 2484 West, a west-bound freight train, consisted of Diesel-electric unit 2484, one Diesel-electric unit in tow, one car, and a caboose. This train departed from Lake City, 16.9 miles east of Red Wing, at 4:30 p. m. It passed signal 367.1, which indicated Proceed, passed signal 369.5, which indicated Approach, and while moving at a speed of 46 miles per hour it struck track motor-car 7479.

The track motor-car was moved westward a distance of 893 feet to the point at which the locomotive of Extra 2484 West stopped. The track motor-car and both trailers were demolished. The front end of the locomotive of Extra 2484 West was slightly damaged.

The employee who was operating the track motor-car was killed. The employee who was accompanying him was injured.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred at 4:55 p. m.

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the accident the average daily movement in the vicinity of the point of accident was 28.7 trains.

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Track motor-car 7479 was powered by a 6-cylinder 85-horsepower engine. It weighed 1,600 pounds and had seating capacity for 10 persons. Both the track motor-car and the trailers were insulated to prevent the shunting of track circuits.

Discussion

At the time the accident occurred the camp cars assigned to a maintenance-of-way extra gang were parked near the east end of the westward siding at Red Wing. The members of this force were assigned to work from 5 a. m. until 2:30 p. m. When the track motor-cars assigned to this force were not in use they were placed on the east end of the siding. The track motor-car at the east end was secured with a chain and a standard switch lock, and the east siding-switch was locked and spiked for movement on the main track.

The food and supplies for the camp were sent to Red Wing on a west-bound passenger train due at Red Wing at 12:43 p. m. Usually the supplies were unloaded from the train at the camp cars, but on the day of the accident the train was late and the supplies were unloaded at the station.

About 4 p. m. on the day of the accident two members of the extra gang assigned as camp attendants drove to the station in an automobile. One of these employees entered the station and asked the operator whether there were any west-bound trains in the vicinity. He told the operator that he desired to use a track motor-car on the westward main track and that the movement would require about 25 minutes. The operator told him that no west-bound train would reach Red Wing during that period of time. The two employees then returned to the camp cars. They unlocked the track motor-car at the east end of the siding and moved the car and two trailers onto the westward main track and then westward toward the station. Neither of these employees was authorized or qualified to operate a track motor-car, and neither was authorized to have a switch key in his possession. The employee who had talked with the operator at the station operated the track motor-car. When these employees reached the camp cars an extra gang foreman, who was also off duty, stopped them. He instructed the operator of the car to replace the car on the siding. The operator of the car disregarded these instructions and again started the car westward. As the car started, the foreman boarded one of the trailers. He said he accompanied the operator of the car in order to protect the movement until

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the car was removed from the main track. The car was stopped at the station about 4:30 p. m., and supplies for the camp were loaded on the trailers. While the supplies were being loaded the foreman asked the operator whether there were any west-bound trains in the vicinity. The operator told him that a west-bound freight train should reach Red Wing within 25 or 30 minutes. The foreman returned to the track motor-car and gave this information to the other employees. He then operated the car to a point about 1,500 feet west of the east switch of the westward siding, where the supplies were to be unloaded. While the other employees were unloading the supplies, the foreman proceeded eastward to provide protection. When he reached the switch he heard Extra 2484 West approaching and also heard the track motor-car moving eastward behind him. He continued eastward and gave stop signals with a red flag. He had reached a point which he thought was about 200 feet east of the switch when Extra 2484 West passed him. The employee who was accompanying the operator of the track motor-car said that as they completed unloading the supplies he heard Extra 2484 West approaching. He said he warned the operator of the car, but the operator started the car eastward in an attempt to place it on the siding before the arrival of the train. He stopped the car at a point 10 feet east of the switch. Several seconds later it was struck by Extra 2484 West. The employee who had accompanied the operator of the track motor-car said that he had assisted in taking supplies from the station to the camp cars on numerous previous occasions. He said that prior to the day of the accident a motor-truck had always been used for this purpose, but on the day of the accident the operator of the track motor-car had instructed him that they would use the track motor-car.

As Extra 2484 West was approaching the point where the accident occurred the enginemen were maintaining a lookout ahead from the control compartment of the locomotive. The fireman, a qualified engineer, was operating the locomotive. The members of the train crew were in the caboose. Because of curvature of the track and vegetation north of the track, the enginemen were unable to see the track motor-car until they reached a point which they thought was from 300 to 500 feet east of the switch. They saw the track motor-car and the stop signals being given by the foreman at approximately the same time. When they saw the car the engineer immediately made an emergency application of the brakes. According to the tape of the speed-recording device, the speed was 53 miles per hour when the brake application became effective and 46 miles per hour when the collision occurred.

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Cause

This accident was caused by the unauthorized use of a track motor-car.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this sixteenth day of November, 1956.

By the Commission, Commissioner Clarke.

(SEAL)

HAROLD D. McCOY,
Secretary.