

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2600
THE CHICAGO, ROCK ISLAND & PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
AT RULETON, KANS., ON
JULY 11, 1942

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SUMMARY

Railroad: Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific

Date: July 11, 1942

Location: Ruleton, Kans.

Kind of accident: Head-end collision

Trains involved: Passenger : Freight

Train numbers: 5 : 96

Engine numbers: 921 : 2308

Consist: 3 cars : 15 cars, caboose

Speed: Standing : 20 m. p. h.

Operation: Timetable and train orders,
and manual-block system for
following trains only

Track: Single; tangent; 0.25 percent
descending grade eastward

Weather: Clear

Time: 1:52 a. m.

Casualties: 1 killed; 3 injured

Cause: Accident caused by No. 96 occupying
main track on time of opposing
superior train and by failure to
control speed properly

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2600

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

THE CHICAGO, ROCK ISLAND & PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY

August 24, 1942.

Accident at Ruleton, Kans., on July 11, 1942, caused by
No. 96 occupying main track on time of opposing
superior train and by failure to control speed
properly.

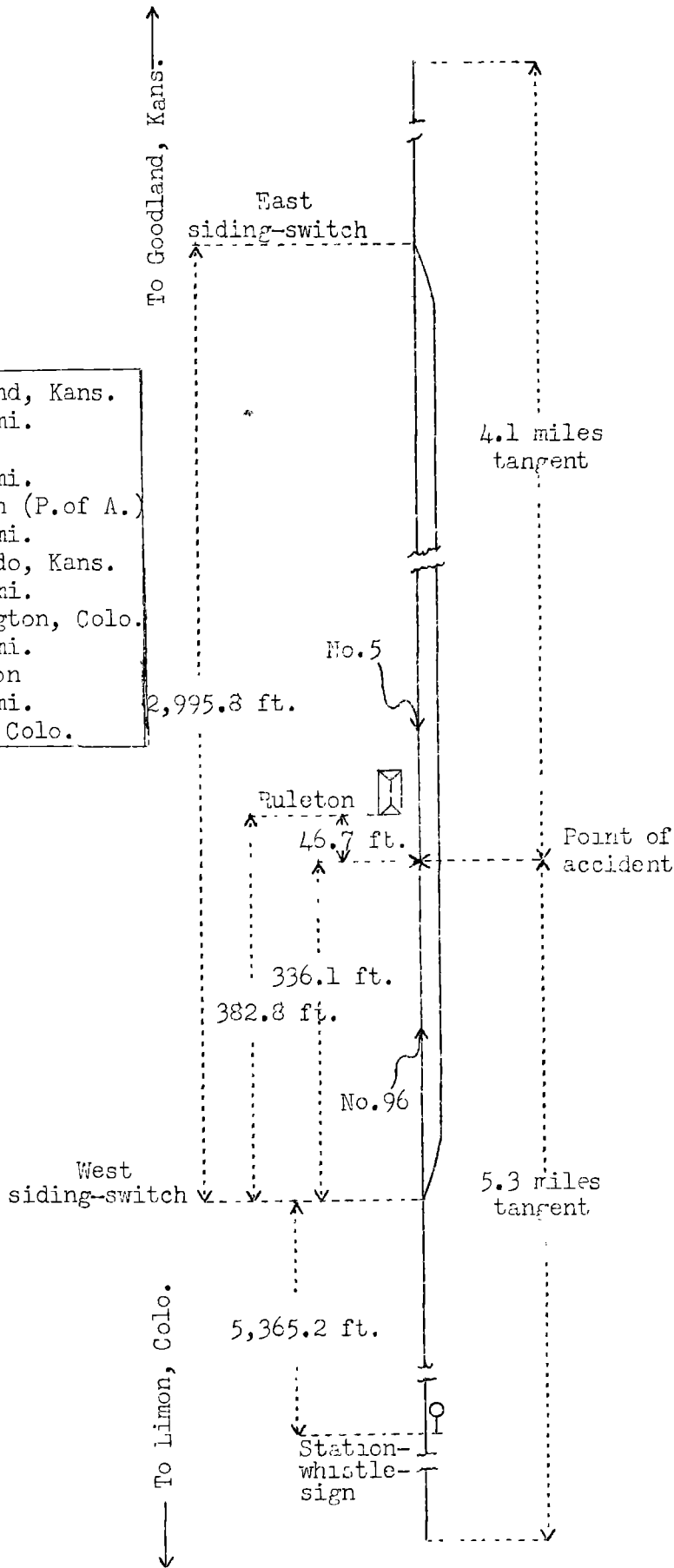
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On July 11, 1942, there was a head-end collision between a passenger train and a freight train on the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway at Ruleton, Kans., which resulted in the death of one employee and the injury of one passenger and two employees.

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	Goodland, Kans.	5.5 mi.
o	Caruso	4.1 mi.
^	Ruleton (P. of A.)	8.0 mi.
o	Kanorado, Kans.	12.3 mi.
o	Burlington, Colo.	18.4 mi.
o	Stratton	58.7 mi.
o	Limon, Colo.	



Inv. No. 2600
 Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway
 Ruleton, Kans.
 July 11, 1942

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Western Division designated as Subdivision 9 and extending between Goodland, Kans., and Limon, Colo., a distance of 107 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders, and a manual-block system for following trains only. At Ruleton a siding 2,995.8 feet in length parallels the main track on the south. The west switch of this siding is located 382.8 feet west of the station. The accident occurred on the main track at a point 336.1 feet east of the west siding-switch. As the point of accident is approached from the west the track is tangent 5.3 miles to the point of accident and 4.1 miles beyond. The grade for east-bound trains is, successively, 0.71 percent descending 1,100 feet, 0.49 percent descending 300 feet, 0.33 percent descending 200 feet, 0.04 percent descending 800 feet, 0.08 percent ascending 300 feet, 0.16 percent ascending 1,100 feet, and 0.25 percent descending 1,900 feet to the point of accident.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

5. * * *

The time applies at the switch where an opposing train enters the siding; * * *

* * *

S-72. Trains of the first class are superior to those of the second; * * *

* * *

S-87. An inferior train must keep out of the way of opposing superior trains and failing to clear the main track by the time required by rule must be protected as prescribed by Rule 99.

* * *

S-89. At meeting points, the inferior train must take the siding and clear the time of the superior train not less than five minutes, except at schedule meeting points between trains of the same class where the inferior train must clear the main track before the leaving time of the superior train.

The inferior train must pull into the siding when practicable. * * *

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FORMS OF
TRAIN ORDERS.

* * *

S-E

Time Orders.

(1) No 2 Eng 33 wait at H until 9 59 a m for
No 61 Eng 99.

The train first named must not pass the designated point before the time given, unless the other train has arrived. The train last named is required to run with respect to the time specified, at the designated point or any intermediate station where schedule time is earlier than the time specified in the order, as before required to run with respect to the schedule time of the train first named.

* * *

In the vicinity of the point of accident the maximum authorized speed for passenger trains is 60 miles per hour, and for freight trains, 50 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

No. 5, a west-bound first-class passenger train, consisted of engine 921, one baggage-mail car, one baggage car and one coach, in the order named. All cars were of steel construction. At Goodland, 9.6 miles east of Ruleton and the last open office, the crew received a clearance card together with copies of six train orders, of which one was train order No. 8, Form 19, reading as follows:

No 5 eng 921 wait at
Caruso until 1 45 a m
Ruleton 1 55 a m
Kenorado 2 10 a m
for No 96 eng 2308

This train departed from Goodland at 1:37 a. m., according to the dispatcher's record of movement of trains, 12 minutes late, stopped on the main track east of the west siding-switch at Ruleton at 1:50 a. m. and 2 minutes later was struck by No. 96.

No. 96, an east-bound second-class freight train, consisted of engine 2308, 15 loaded cars and a caboose. An air-brake test was made and this train departed from Limon, Colo., 97.4 miles west of Ruleton, at 11:20 p. m., July 10, according to the dispatcher's record of movement of trains, 1 hour 10 minutes late.

At Stratton, 38.7 miles west of Ruleton, the crew received a clearance card and copies of train order No. 8, Form 19, previously quoted. No. 96 departed from Stratton at 1 a. m., 1 hour 5 minutes late, passed Burlington, Colo., 20.3 miles west of Ruleton and the last open office, at 1:26 a. m., 1 hour 6 minutes late, passed the west siding-switch at Ruleton and while moving at an estimated speed of 20 miles per hour collided with No. 5. The brakes of this train functioned properly at all points where used en route.

The front end of engine 921 of No. 5 was badly damaged. The engine truck was torn loose and the No. 1 and No. 2 pairs of driving wheels were derailed. Engine 2308, of No. 96, was derailed and stopped upright, on the roadbed and parallel to the track, at a point 134.7 feet east of the point of collision. The front end of the engine was badly damaged. The front truck of the tender was derailed. The rear truck of the first car of No. 96 was derailed. The second, third and fourth cars were demolished. The fifth car was derailed and stopped, badly damaged, upright and south of the track. The front trucks of the sixth and seventh cars were derailed and the cars were considerably damaged.

It was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred at 1:52 a. m.

The employee killed was the front brakeman of No. 96. The employees injured were the fireman of No. 96 and the engineer of No. 5.

Data

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the accident, the average daily movement in the vicinity of the point of accident was 11.5 trains.

Discussion

The rules governing operation on the line involved provide that an inferior train must keep out of the way of opposing superior trains, and an inferior train must clear the time of opposing superior trains not less than 5 minutes.

The crews of the trains involved held copies of a train order which required No. 5, a west-bound first-class train, to wait at Caruso, 4.1 miles east of Ruleton, until 1:45 a. m., at Ruleton until 1:55 a. m. and at Kanorado, 8.0 miles west of Ruleton, until 2:10 a. m. for No. 96, an east-bound second-class train. There are sidings at each of these stations. Under the rules, No. 96 was required to be into clear at Ruleton not later than 1:50 a. m. if it proceeded to that station for No. 5. If No. 96 proceeded beyond the west siding-switch at Ruleton, it was not authorized to occupy the main track between the west switch at Ruleton and the west switch at Caruso after 1:40 a. m.

No. 5 stopped on the main track at Ruleton with the engine standing at a point about 336 feet east of the west siding-switch at 1:50 a. m. No. 96 passed Kanorado about 1:40 a. m., passed the west siding-switch at Ruleton and struck No. 5 at 1:52 a. m.

The members of the crew of No. 96 compared time before their train departed from Limon and there was a variation of only a few seconds in their watches. They understood that the train was inferior to No. 5 and that, at the points designated in the order, their train was required to clear the times specified not less than 5 minutes. As No. 96 was approaching Kanorado the engineer observed the time as 1:38 a. m. and he informed the fireman and the front brakeman that sufficient time remained for their train to proceed to Ruleton to clear for No. 5. When No. 96 passed the one-mile sign west of Kanorado the conductor and the flagman, who were in the caboose, observed the time as 1:39 a. m. and they were confident that sufficient time remained for their train to proceed to Ruleton to clear not later than 1:55 a. m. Soon after No. 96 passed Kanorado, the speed was 50 miles per hour and this speed was maintained until the engine passed the one-mile sign west of Ruleton. According to the statement of the engineer of No. 96, after the engine passed the one-mile sign he made a 10-pound brake-pipe reduction, but the speed was not being reduced sufficiently for the engine to stop short of the west siding-switch, and he moved the brake valve to emergency position. In addition, he sounded a signal on the engine whistle for No. 5 to move backward; however, No. 5 had just started backward when the accident occurred. The speed of No. 96 was about 20 miles per hour at the time of the collision. The brakes of this train functioned properly at all points where used. If the speed of No. 96 had been controlled properly when the train was approaching Ruleton, undoubtedly this train could have entered the siding and cleared for No. 5 not later than 1:55 a. m., which would have been 5 minutes later than the time required by the rules, but the accident would have been averted.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by No. 96 occupying main track on the time of an opposing superior train and by failure to control speed properly.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-fourth day of August, 1942.

B. the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.