

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

REPORT NO. 3682
ELGIN, JOLIET & EASTERN RAILWAY COMPANY
IN RE ACCIDENT
NEAR KIRK YARD, GARY, IND., ON
SEPTEMBER 5, 1966

SUMMARY

Date: September 5, 1955

Railroad: Elgin, Joliet & Eastern

Location: Kirk Yard, Gary, Ind.

Kind of accident: Collision

Equipment involved: Transfer train : Out of cars

Train number: Extra 441 West

Locomotive number: Diesel-electric unit 441

Consists: 23 cars, caboose : 26 cars

Estimated speed: 10 m. p. h. : Standing

Operation: Operating rules

Track: Auxiliary track; tangent; 0.27 percent descending grade westward

Weather: Hazy; dark

Time: 8 p. m.

Casualties: 1 killed; 3 injured

Cause: Failure to control the speed of a train properly while moving on an auxiliary track

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT NO. 3652

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

ELGIN, JOLIET & EASTERN RAILWAY COMPANY

October 13, 1955

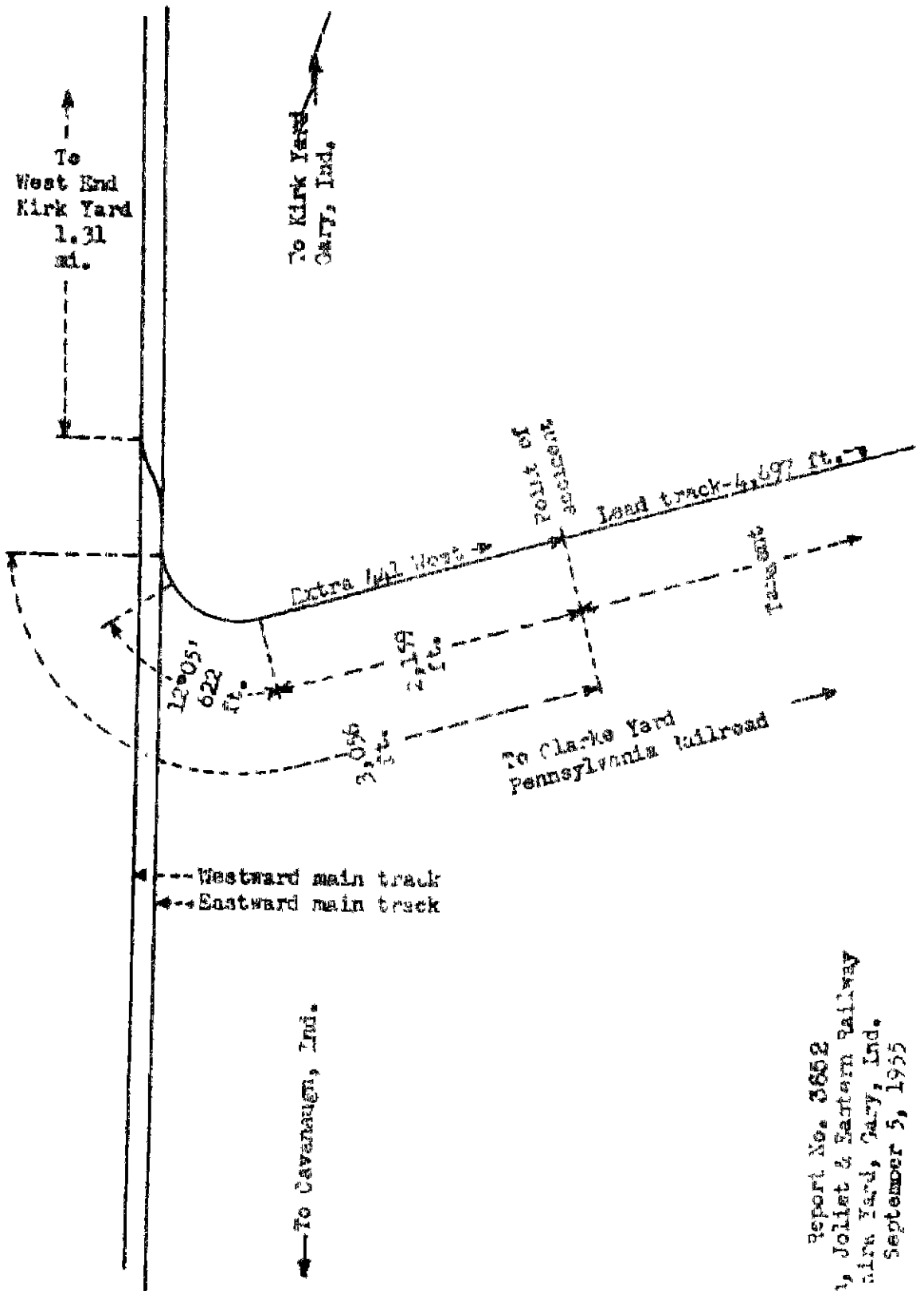
Accident near Kirk Yard, Gary, Ind., on September 5,
1955, caused by failure to control the speed of
a train properly while moving on an auxiliary
track.

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REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

CLARKE, Commissioner:

On September 5, 1955, there was a collision between
a transfer train and a cut of cars on the Elgin, Joliet
& Eastern Railway at Gary, Ind., which resulted in the
death of one train-service employee, and the injury of
three train-service employees.

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



Report No. 3652
 Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway
 Kirk Yard, Gary, Ind.
 September 5, 1955

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on an auxiliary yard lead track on that part of the Gary Division extending between Kirk Yard, Gary, Ind., and Cavanaugh, Ind., 3.67 miles, a double-track line. At a point approximately 1.31 miles west of the west end of Kirk Yard a facing-point crossover connects the two main tracks. Immediately west of the crossover a lead track diverges from the eastward main track and extends southward a distance of 4,697 feet to the Clarke Yard of the Pennsylvania Railroad. The lead track is leased by the Pennsylvania Railroad. Timetable directions on the E.J. & E. are east and west, and these directions are used in this report. The accident occurred on the lead track at a point 3,056 feet west of the east switch. From the east on the lead track there is a 12°08' curve to the left 622 feet in length and a tangent 2,159 feet to the point of accident and a considerable distance westward. The grade is 0.27 percent descending westward at the point of accident.

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

DEFINITIONS.

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

104. When cars are pushed by an engine * * * a trainman must take a conspicuous position on the leading car, * * * Employee riding the leading car must maintain a sharp lookout ahead and regulate the movement by proper hand signal. * * *

105. Unless otherwise provided, trains or engines using a siding or other auxiliary track must proceed at reduced speed.

* * *

There is no prescribed maximum authorized speed on the track on which this accident occurred.

Description of Accident

Extra 441 West, a west-bound transfer train, consisted of a caboose, Diesel-electric unit 441, and 23 freight cars, in the order named. This train entered the westward main track at the west end of Kirk Yard en route to Clarke Yard. It entered the lead track at the east switch, and while moving at an estimated speed of about 10 miles per hour it struck a cut of 26 cars which were standing on that track. The accident occurred at a point 3,056 feet west of the east lead-track switch.

Extra 441 West stopped with the locomotive approximately at the point of collision. The caboose was demolished. No other equipment was derailed. The locomotive and the east car in the cut of cars on the lead track were somewhat damaged.

One yard brakeman was killed. The engineer, the fireman, and one yard brakeman were injured.

In the immediate vicinity of the point of accident the weather was hazy, and it was dark at the time of the accident, which occurred about 8 p. m.

Discussion

✓ The brakes of Extra 441 West were tested before the train departed from Kirk Yard, and they functioned properly. When this train entered the westward main track the enginemen were in their respective positions in the control compartment of the locomotive, the two yard brakemen were on the platform at the west end of the caboose, and the yard conductor was on the rear car. Because the caboose was ahead of the locomotive, the headlight was dimmed. The cars in the train were to be delivered to the Pennsylvania Railroad at Clarke Yard, and the locomotive was to return with the caboose. As the train was moving through the crossover and onto the lead track the yard conductor alighted, and after restoring the switches to

normal position he remained in this vicinity. The surviving yard brakeman said that as the train moved westward on the lead track he was on the north side of the platform at the west end of the caboose and the other yard brakeman was on the opposite side. He said that when the train entered the lead track the weather was clear and objects were visible at a distance of several hundred feet. The grade on the lead track is descending westward, and the yard brakeman said that as the caboose moved toward lower ground a haze materially restricted his range of vision. He first saw the cars ahead at a distance which he thought was about 50 feet. When he saw the cars he gave a stop signal and called a warning to the other brakeman. He alighted before the collision occurred. The enginemen said that because of the caboose ahead of the locomotive they were unable to see the track ahead. The engineer said that the lantern of the yard brakeman on the north side of the platform of the caboose was visible at all times after the train entered the lead track. He said that as the train was closely approaching the point where the accident occurred the yard brakeman gave a violent stop signal. He immediately made an emergency application of the brakes, and the collision occurred almost immediately afterwards. The fireman said that as the train approached the point of accident he was maintaining a lookout ahead and that there were no signals given from the south side of the caboose. The surviving employees on the train estimated that the train approached the point of accident at a speed of 10 or 12 miles per hour.

The cars which were struck had been placed on the lead track by a crew of the Pennsylvania Railroad. A trainmaster of this carrier said that it is not unusual to leave cars on this track when there is not room for them on other tracks and that when this is done it is not customary to notify other crews of the location of the cars. The yard conductor of Extra 441 West said that he had been instructed in the past to watch for cars on this track, but he could remember only one previous occasion on which he had used the track and the track had not been clear. The engineer had been on this assignment during a period of several months, and he said that on every trip he had made to Clarke Yard the lead

track had been clear. The surviving yard brakeman said that he had made only a few trips to Clarke Yard and that on each of these trips the lead track had been clear.

The rules of this carrier provide that a train moving on an auxiliary track must proceed at reduced speed. This accident occurred on an auxiliary track, and the speed of Extra 441 West was required to be so controlled that it could be stopped short of a train or obstruction.

Cause

This accident was caused by failure to control the speed of a train properly while moving on an auxiliary track.

Filed at Washington, D. C., this thirteenth
day of October, 1968.

By the Commission, Commissioner Clarke.

(SEAL)

HAROLD D. McGOY,
Secretary.