

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

REPORT NO. 3470
GRAND TRUNK WESTERN RAILROAD COMPANY
IN RE ACCIDENT
NEAR LINDEN, MICH., ON
JUNE 29, 1952

SUMMARY

Date:	June 29, 1952
Railroad:	Grand Trunk Western
Location:	Linden, Mich.
Kind of accident:	Head-end collision
Trains involved:	Freight : Freight
Train numbers:	Extra 3723 East : Extra 3743 West
Engine numbers:	3723 : 3743
Consists:	51 cars, cabooses : 102 cars, cabooses
Estimated speeds:	10 m. p. h. : 40 m. p. h.
Operation:	Timetable and train orders
Track:	Single; tangent; 0.43 percent ascending grade eastward
Weather:	Raining
Time:	2:30 a. m.
Casualties:	6 injured
Cause:	Failure to obey meet order

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT NO. 3470

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

GRAND TRUNK WESTERN RAILROAD COMPANY

July 31, 1952

Accident near Linden, Mich., on June 29, 1952, caused by
failure to obey a meet order.

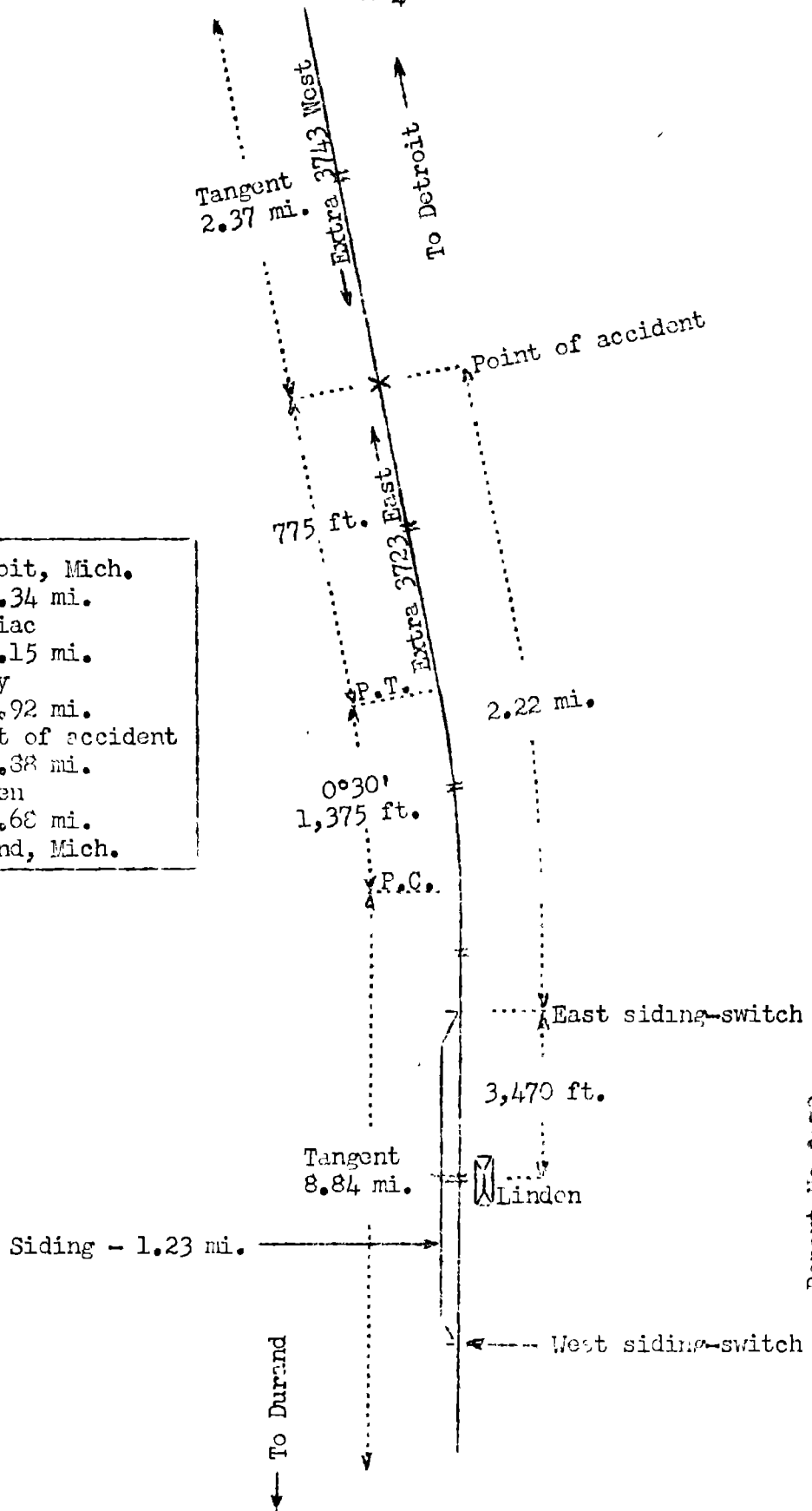
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On June 29, 1952, there was a head-end collision between two freight trains on the Grand Trunk Western Railroad near Linden, Mich., which resulted in the injury of six train-service employees. This accident was investigated in conjunction with a representative of the Michigan Public Service Commission.

¹
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.

o	Detroit, Mich.
	26.34 mi.
o	Pontiac
	20.15 mi.
o	Holly
	5.92 mi.
X	Point of accident
	2.38 mi.
o	Linden
	11.68 mi.
o	Durand, Mich.



Report No. 3470
Grand Trunk Western Railroad
Linden, Mich.
June 29, 1952

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Detroit Division extending between Durand and Detroit, Mich., 66.97 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line, over which, at the time of the accident, trains were operated by timetable and train orders. There was no block system in use. At Linden, 11.68 miles east of Durand, a siding 1.23 miles in length parallels the main track on the north. The east siding-switch is 3,470 feet east of the station. The accident occurred on the main track at a point 2.22 miles east of the east siding-switch at Linden. From the west there are, in succession, a tangent 8.84 miles in length, a 0°30' curve to the left 1,375 feet, and a tangent 775 feet to the point of accident and 2.37 miles eastward. The grade is 0.43 percent ascending eastward at the point of accident.

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

88. (SINGLE TRACK) At meeting points * * *

Between * * * extra trains, the train in the inferior time table direction must take the siding;

* * *

89. (SINGLE TRACK) * * *

When necessary to stop to meet a train, the train holding the main track must stop clear of the switch to be used by the other train in taking the siding.

* * *

214. * * *

Conductors and enginemen must require their brakemen and firemen to read aloud and know the contents of all train orders.

Forms of Train Orders

* * *

Form A-(SINGLE TRACK) Fixing meeting points for opposing trains.

(1) * * *

Extra 702 North meet Extra 703 South at B.

* * *

Trains receiving these orders will run to the designated points and there meet in the manner prescribed by the Rules.

* * *

Timetable special instructions provide that east-bound trains are superior to trains of the same class in the opposite direction.

The maximum authorized speed for the trains involved was 45 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

Extra 3723 East, an east-bound freight train, consisted of engine 3723, 51 cars and a caboose. At Durand, the last open office west of the point of accident, the crew received, among others, copies of train order No. 1 reading as follows:

ENG 3743 RUN EXTRA PONTIAC TO DURAND MEET EXTRA 3723 EAST AT LINDEN.

Extra 3723 East departed from Durand at 1:55 a. m., passed the east siding-switch at Linden, where it was required to stop clear of the fouling point unless Extra 3743 West was into clear on the siding, and while moving at an estimated speed of 10 miles per hour it collided with Extra 3743 West at a point 2.22 miles east of the east siding-switch.

Extra 3743 West, a west-bound freight train, consisted of engine 3743, 102 cars and a caboose. At Pontiac, 28.95 miles east of Linden, the crew received copies of train order No. 1. This train departed from Pontiac at 1:30 a. m., passed Holly, 3.8 miles east of Linden and the last open office, at 2:13 a. m., and while moving at an estimated speed of 40 miles per hour it collided with Extra 3723 East.

Both engines and tenders, the first 10 cars and the front truck of the eleventh car of Extra 3723 East, and the first 7 cars of Extra 3743 West were derailed. The engines remained upright and approximately in line with the track. Each tender was separated from its engine, and the tenders and the derailed cars stopped in various positions on or near the track. The eleventh car of Extra 3723 East was slightly damaged. The engines and tenders and the other derailed cars were badly damaged.

The engineer, the fireman, and the front brakeman of Extra 3723 East and the engineer, the fireman, and the front brakeman of Extra 3743 West were injured.

It was raining at the time of the accident, which occurred at 2:30 a. m.

Discussion

Train order No. 1 established Linden as the meeting point between Extra 3723 East and Extra 3743 West. Under the rules Extra 3743 West was required to enter the siding at the east siding-switch, and Extra 3723 East was required to stop clear of this switch unless Extra 3743 West was into clear on the siding.

The conductor of Extra 3723 East received copies of several train orders, including train order No. 1, at Durand. The other members of the crew were on the train and the train was moving when he left the office. He handed copies of the train orders to the front brakeman as the engine passed him, and then boarded the caboose as the rear end of the train passed. Each member of the crew read the train orders, and each understood the requirements of train order No. 1. As this train was approaching Linden the speed was about 40 miles per hour. The enginemen were in their usual positions in the cab of the engine, the front brakeman was on the deck of the engine, and the conductor and the flagman were in the caboose. The brakes of the train had been tested and had functioned properly when used en route. The engineer said that because of a heavy rain and a strong wind he kept the window on his side of the cab closed during most of the trip. A traffic-control system was being installed on this line, and the signal masts had been erected but the signals were not placed in service until 9 days after the accident occurred. The engineer said that after seeing a signal mast which he thought was the mast located about 1-1/2 miles west of Linden he stood up and put on his jacket. Before he returned to his seat he

saw what he assumed to be the crossing-whistle sign for a rail-highway grade crossing west of the west siding-switch at Linden, and he sounded the grade-crossing whistle signal. When the engine entered the curve west of the point where the accident occurred the engineer became aware that the train had passed Linden. He immediately made an emergency application of the brakes. The speed of the train was reduced to about 10 miles per hour when the collision occurred. The engineer said afterward that apparently he was confused as to the location of his train and passed the signal mast west of Linden without seeing it, then when he saw the signal mast at Linden he mistook it for the mast located about 1-1/2 miles west of that station. He thought that the engine may have passed the siding while he was engaged in putting on his jacket. The fireman said that he was aware of the location of the train as it passed Linden, but he overlooked the fact that Linden was the meeting point between his train and Extra 3743 West. When the engine entered the curve east of Linden he observed the headlight of the opposing train and called a warning to the other employees on the engine. The front brakeman said that because he was bothered with an aching tooth he was riding on the deck of the engine instead of on the brakeman's seat. Until he heard the fireman call a warning he was not aware of the location of the train. The conductor and the flagman said that they were engaged in performing clerical work after the train departed from Durand and that they each went to the rear platform of the caboose and inspected the train at intervals. The flagman went to the rear platform when the train was in the vicinity of Linden, but because of the rain and darkness he could not immediately identify a landmark which would indicate the exact location of the train. A short time later he realized that the train had passed Linden. The brakes were applied in emergency by the engineer before the flagman or the conductor could take action to stop the train.

The engineer, the fireman, and the front brakeman of Extra 3743 West were so seriously injured that they could not be questioned during this investigation. The conductor and the flagman said that the speed was about 40 miles per hour as the train approached the point at which the accident occurred. These employees were in the caboose and were not aware that an accident had occurred until they investigated to ascertain the cause for the abrupt stop east of Linden.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure to obey a meet order.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this thirty-first day of July, 1952.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.