

RAILROAD ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

Report No 3772

GULF, COLORADO AND SANTA FE RAILWAY COMPANY

HASLET, TEX

AUGUST 12, 1957

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

Washington

SUMMARY

§§§

DATE	August 12, 1957	
RAILROAD	Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe	
LOCATION	Haslet, Tex	
KIND OF ACCIDENT	Collision	
EQUIPMENT INVOLVED	Passenger train	Motor truck
TRAIN NUMBER	15	
LOCOMOTIVE NUMBER	Diesel-electric units 312L, 312A, 312B and 311B	
CONSIST	12 cars	
SPEEDS	84 m p h	Undetermined
OPERATION	Signal indications	
TRACK	Single, tangent, 0.48 percent ascending grade southward	
HIGHWAY	Tangent, crosses track at an angle of 74°05', 0.16 percent descending grade westward	
WEATHER	Clear	
TIME	12:44 p m	
CASUALTIES	3 killed, 1 injured	
CAUSE	Motor-truck occupying rail-highway grade crossing immediately in front of approaching train	

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT NO 3772

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

GULF, COLORADO AND SANTA FE RAILWAY COMPANY

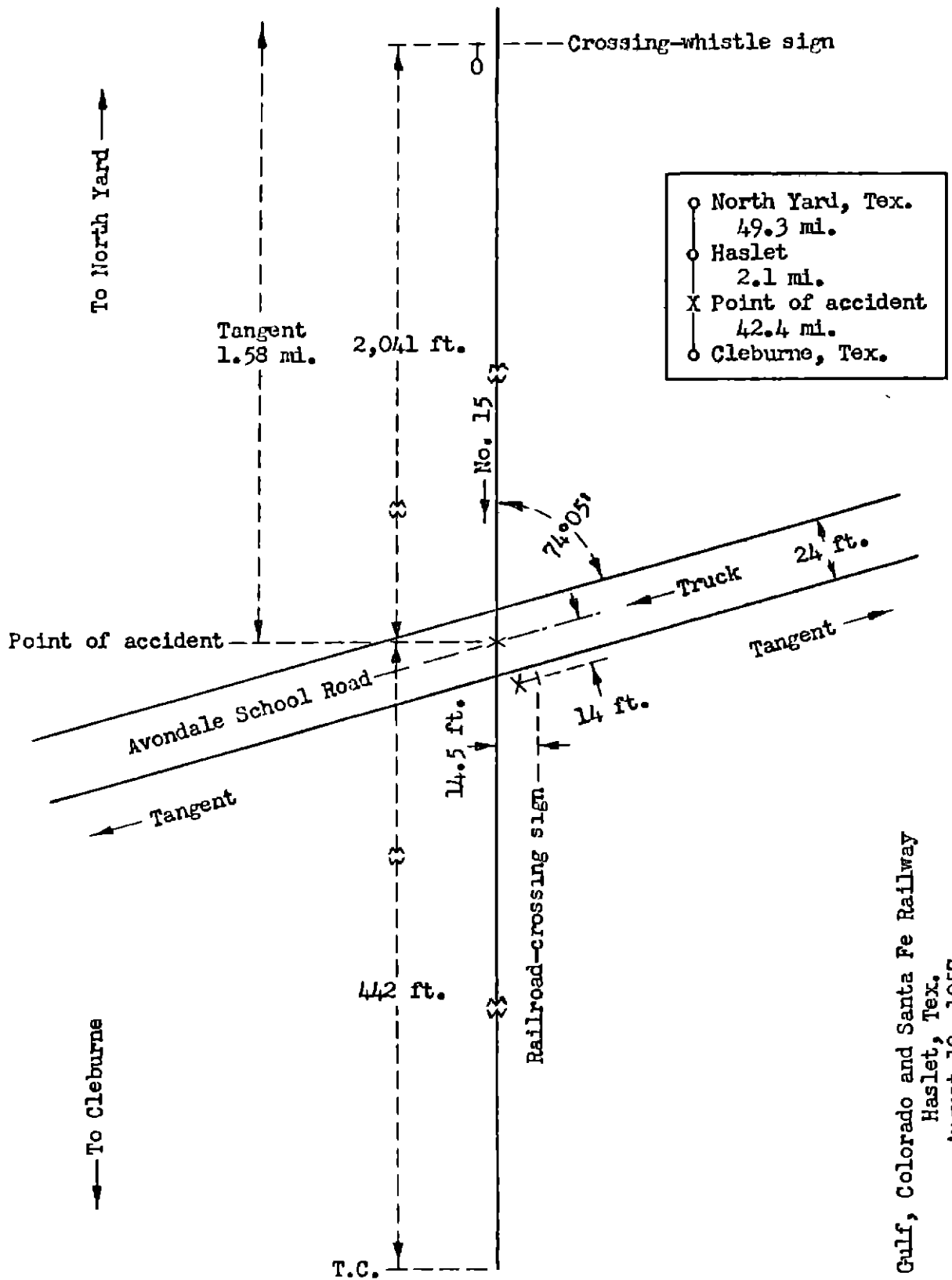
January 13, 1958

Accident near Haslet, Tex , on August 12, 1957, caused by a motor-truck occupying a rail-highway grade crossing immediately in front of an approaching train

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹*TUGGLE, Commissioner*

On August 12, 1957, there was a collision between a passenger train on the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe Railway and a motor-truck at a rail-highway grade crossing near Haslet, Tex , which resulted in the death of the driver of the truck and two train-service employees, and the injury of one person

¹ Under authority of section 17 (2) of the *Interstate Commerce Act* the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the Commission to Commissioner Tuggle for consideration and disposition



Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe Railway
 Haslet, Tex.
 August 12, 1957

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Northern Division extending between North Yard and Cleburne, Tex., 93.8 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line over which trains are operated by signal indications. The accident occurred on the main track at a point 51.4 miles south of North Yard and 2.1 miles south of Haslet, Tex., where the railroad is crossed at grade by Avondale School Road, No. 4047. The track is tangent throughout a distance of 1.58 miles immediately north of the point of accident and 442 feet southward. The grade is 0.48 percent ascending southward at the point of accident.

When the accident occurred, Avondale School Road, a gravel road, was being surfaced with a bituminous material in the vicinity of the crossing. The road is 24 feet in width and it intersects the railroad at an angle of 74°05'. The road is tangent throughout a considerable distance immediately east and west of the crossing. The grade for westbound vehicles is 0.16 percent descending throughout a distance of 200 feet immediately east of the crossing.

A standard crossbuck railroad-crossing sign is located in the southeast angle of the intersection of the Avondale School Road and the railroad. It is 14 feet south of the centerline of the road and 14 feet 6 inches east of the centerline of the track. The sign is mounted on a mast 9 feet above the level of the road and bears the words "RAILROAD CROSSING" in reflectorized black letters on a white background. A crossing-whistle sign for southbound trains is located 2,041 feet north of the crossing.

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

14 Engine Whistle Signals

Note -The signals prescribed are illustrated by "o" for short sounds, "—" for longer sounds.

* * *

Sound	Indication
(1) — — o — —	Approaching public crossings at grade, * * * to be prolonged or repeated until crossing is reached.

* * *

17 The headlight will be displayed to the front of every train by day and night * * *

30 The engine bell must be rung when an engine is * * * approaching and passing public crossings at grade * * *

The maximum authorized speed for passenger trains in the vicinity of the point of accident is 90 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

No. 15, a southbound first-class passenger train, consisted of diesel-electric units 312L, 312A, 312B, and 311B, coupled in multiple-unit control, two baggage cars, one mail car, four chair cars, one dining car, one lounge car, and three sleeping cars, in the order named. All cars were of lightweight steel construction and were equipped with controlled-slack couplers. This train departed from North Yard at 11:59 a. m., 19 minutes late, and while moving at a speed of 84 miles per hour, as indicated by the tape of the speed-recording device, it struck a motor-truck 2.1 miles south of Haslet where the railroad is crossed at grade by Avondale School Road.

The vehicle involved was a tank motor-truck equipped with a distributor for the spraying of bituminous material on the surface of roads. It was owned by the Tarrant County Highway Department, Texas. The driver of the truck held a Texas license. The truck was a 1950 model Chevrolet powered by a 6-cylinder gasoline engine and was equipped with a conventional cab. It bore Texas license number XC 8837. The tank had a capacity of 1,250 gallons. The bituminous distributor was attached to the rear of the tank and consisted of a kerosene heating element, a pump driven by a gasoline engine, a spray bar, and controlling devices. A platform was provided at the rear of the truck for an operator to control the spraying device. The total length of the vehicle was 25 feet. At the time of the accident the tank was loaded with approximately 1,100 gallons of heated bituminous material. The capacities of the fuel tank of the truck, the heating element, and the pump engine were, respectively, 16 gallons, 30 gallons, and 6 gallons. Each fuel tank was approximately one-half full when the accident occurred. The total weight of the truck and material was approximately 20,000 pounds. This vehicle was moving westward on Avondale School Road with the spraying device in operation when it entered the crossing at an undetermined speed and was struck by No. 15.

No. 15 stopped with the front end of the locomotive 4,844 feet south of the crossing. No equipment of the train was derailed. The tank of the truck was ruptured and torn loose from the frame. A portion of the tank lodged in the front end of the locomotive. The hot bituminous material, and gasoline and kerosene from the fuel tanks became ignited and entered the control compartment of the first diesel-electric unit through the windows on the left side which were open. The front end of the first diesel-electric unit was somewhat damaged by the collision, and the control compartment was damaged by fire.

The engineer and the fireman of No. 15, and the driver of the truck were killed. The operator of the spraying device was injured.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred at 12:44 p. m.

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the accident the average daily movement over the crossing was 12.76 trains. During the 24-hour period beginning at 7:00 a. m., August 19, 1957, 27 automobiles, 16 trucks, 1 motorcycle, and 1 threshing machine passed over the crossing.

Discussion

As No. 15 was approaching the point where the accident occurred the enginemen were in the control compartment of the first diesel-electric unit, and the members of the train crew were in various locations in the cars of the train. The brakes of this train had been tested and had functioned properly when used en route. Witnesses said that the engineer sounded the grade-crossing whistle signal when the train was approaching the crossing and that he sounded warning blasts immediately before the accident occurred. Members of the train crew said that the brakes became applied in emergency immediately before the accident occurred. Examination of the first diesel-electric unit after the accident disclosed that the automatic brake-valve handle was in emergency position and that the headlight switch was in on position.

The driver of the truck involved in the accident had been employed by the Tarrant County Highway Department as a driver of that type of vehicle for a period of 10 years. The driver, and the operator who was operating the spraying device, had worked in the vicinity of the crossing during the 2 working days prior to the accident and had driven over the crossing on several occasions. Witnesses said that the noise resulting from the operation of the truck and the spraying device was such that it was unlikely that the driver or the operator could hear the approaching

train. The driver's view of an approaching southbound train was unobstructed throughout a considerable distance. However, he was required to observe the rear of the truck frequently in order that spraying operations could be performed properly, and it is possible that he was so engaged when the accident occurred. The operator's view of an approaching southbound train from his position on the operator's platform was obstructed by the tank of the truck. He said that he did not observe the train until immediately before the accident occurred at which time he alighted.

Cause

This accident was caused by a motor-truck occupying a rail-highway grade crossing immediately in front of an approaching train.

Dated at Washington, D C , this thirteenth
day of January, 1958

By the Commission, Commissioner Tuggle

(SEAL)

HAROLD D. McCOY,
Secretary