

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

REPORT NO. 3761
ILLINOIS CENTRAL RAILROAD COMPANY
IN RE ACCIDENT
AT CEDAR BLUFF, KY., ON
JUNE 26, 1957

SUMMARY

Date: June 26, 1957

Railroad: Illinois Central

Location: Cedar Bluff, Ky.

Kind of accident: Rear-end collision

Trains involved: Freight : Freight

Train numbers: Extra 2528 South : 63

Locomotive numbers: Steam locomotive : Steam locomotive
2528 : 2519

Consists: 71 cars, caboos : 104 cars, caboos

Speeds: Standing : 10 m. p. h.

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

Tracks: Double; 1° curve; 0.86 percent
descending grade southward

Weather: Clear

Time: 6:55 a. m.

Casualties: 1 killed; 1 injured

Cause: Failure to operate following train in
accordance with signal indications

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT NO. 3761

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

ILLINOIS CENTRAL RAILROAD COMPANY

September 23, 1957

Accident at Cedar Bluff, Ky., on June 26, 1957, caused by
failure to operate the following train in accordance
with signal indications.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

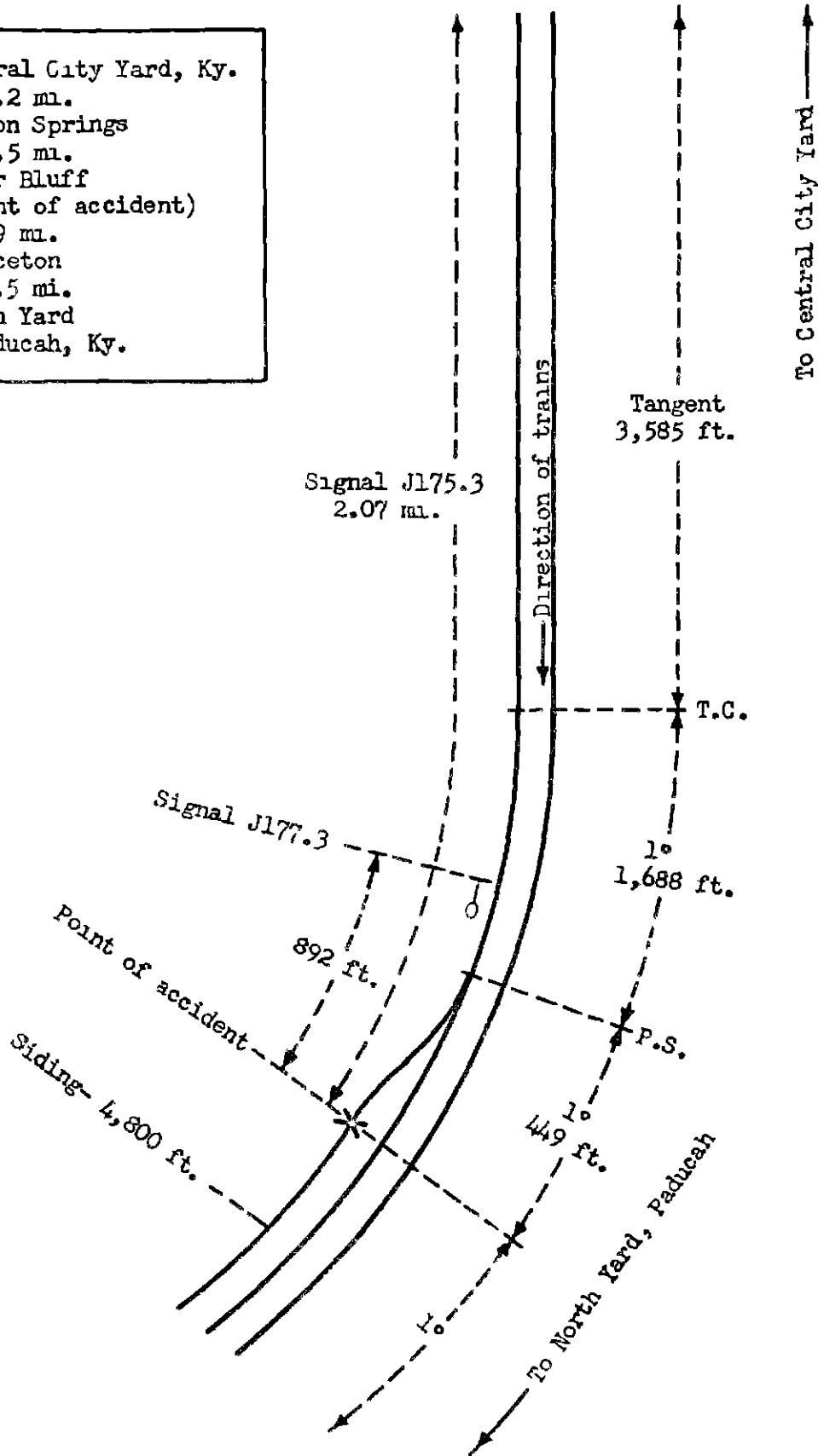
TUGGLE, Commissioner:

On June 26, 1957, there was a rear-end collision
between two freight trains on the Illinois Central Railroad
at Cedar Bluff, Ky., which resulted in the death of one
train-service employee, and the injury of one train-service
employee.

1

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

o	Central City Yard, Ky.	40.2 mi.
o	Dawson Springs	11.5 mi.
X	Cedar Bluff (Point of accident)	2.9 mi.
o	Princeton	45.5 mi.
o	North Yard Paducah, Ky.	



Report No. 3761
Illinois Central Railroad
Cedar Bluff, Ky.
June 26, 1957

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Kentucky Division extending between Central City Yard and North Yard, Paducah, Ky., 100.1 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 system. At Cedar Bluff, 51.7 miles south of Central City Yard, a siding about 4,800 feet in length parallels the southward main track on the west. The accident occurred on the siding at a point 449 feet south of the north switch. From the north there are, in succession, a tangent 3,585 feet in length, and a 1° curve to the right 1,688 feet to the north switch of the siding and a considerable distance southward. The grade is 0.86 percent descending southward at the point of accident.

Automatic signals J175.3 and J177.3, governing south-bound movements on the southward main track, are located, respectively, 2.07 miles and 892 feet north of the point of accident. These signals are of the color-light type and are approach lighted. The aspects applicable to this investigation and the corresponding indications and names are as follows:

<u>Signal</u>	<u>Aspect</u>	<u>Indication</u>	<u>Name</u>
J177.3	Green	PROCEED.	CLEAR.
J175.3 J177.3	Yellow	PROCEED; PREPARING TO STOP AT NEXT SIGNAL. TRAIN EXCEEDING MEDIUM SPEED MUST AT ONCE REDUCE TO THAT SPEED.	APPROACH.
J177.3	Red with number plate	STOP; THEN PROCEED AT RESTRICTED SPEED.	STOP AND PROCEED. See Rule 509 (a.)

The controlling circuits are so arranged that when the north switch of the siding is lined for entry to the siding signal J175.3 indicates Proceed-preparing-to-stop-at-next-signal and signal J177.3 indicates Stop-and-proceed.

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

104. * * *

* * * during the approach or passage of a train or engine on tracks involved, all switches connected with the movement must be secured in the normal position. * * *

* * *

DEFINITIONS

Medium Speed.--A speed not exceeding thirty miles per hour.

Restricted Speed.--Proceed prepared to stop short of train, obstruction, or switch not properly lined and to look out for broken rail, but not exceeding fifteen miles per hour.

509(a). * * * trains or engines may pass stop and proceed signals without stopping, proceeding at restricted speed through the entire block, expecting to find a train in the block, broken rail, obstruction or switch not properly lined.

The maximum authorized speed for freight trains in the vicinity of the point of accident is 45 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

Extra 2528 South, a south-bound freight train, consisted of steam locomotive 2528, 71 cars, and a caboose. This train departed from Dawson Springs, 40.2 miles south of Central City Yard, the last open office, at 5:59 a. m., entered the siding at Cedar Bluff about 6:30 a. m. and stopped with the rear end of the train 449 feet south of the north switch. About 12 minutes later the rear end of the train was struck by No. 63.

No. 63, a south-bound second-class freight train, consisted of steam locomotive 2519, 104 cars, and a caboose. This train departed from Central City Yard at 5:00 a. m., 2 hours 30 minutes late, passed Dawson Springs, the last open office, at 6:30 a. m., 2 hours 20 minutes late, passed signal J175.3 which indicated Proceed-preparing-to-stop-at-next-signal, passed signal J177.3 which indicated Stop-and-proceed, entered the north switch of the siding at Cedar Bluff, which was lined for entry to the siding, and while moving at an estimated speed of 10 miles per hour it struck the rear of Extra 2528 South.

- 7 -

The caboose and the three rear cars of Extra 2528 South were derailed. The caboose and the two rear cars were destroyed, and the third car ahead of the caboose was badly damaged. The locomotive of No. 63, and the fifth to twelfth cars, inclusive, were derailed. The fourth, the fifth, and the eighth to tenth cars, inclusive, were heavily damaged. The locomotive and the other derailed cars were considerably damaged.

The conductor of Extra 2528 South was killed. The fireman of No. 63 was injured.

The weather was clear and the sun was shining at the time of the accident which occurred about 6:55 a. m.

Discussion

The dispatcher instructed the crew of Extra 2528 South at Dawson Springs to take siding at Cedar Bluff for No. 63. Before the train departed from Dawson Springs, the flagman informed the conductor that he intended to eat lunch at a restaurant at Princeton, 2.9 miles south of Cedar Bluff. The conductor instructed the flagman to board the locomotive in order to be near the restaurant when the train stopped at Princeton. The conductor said that he would perform the flagman's duties between Dawson Springs and Princeton. When the train stopped on the siding at Cedar Bluff, the engineer, the fireman, the brakeman, and the flagman were in the cab of the locomotive, and the conductor was in the caboose. The members of the crew on the locomotive were unable to see the caboose of their train because of curvature of the track. The first they became aware of anything being wrong was when the collision occurred. The conductor was killed and it could not be determined why he did not line the siding-switch for movement of No. 63 on the main track.

As No. 63 approached the point where the accident occurred, the engineer and the fireman were in their respective positions in the cab of the locomotive, and the front brakeman was seated behind the fireman. The conductor and the flagman were in the caboose. The brakes of this train had been tested and had functioned properly when used en route. Signal J175.3 indicated Proceed-preparing-to-stop-at-next-signal and the train passed that signal at an estimated speed of 25 miles per hour. The engineer made a light service brake application when the train was about one mile south of signal J175.3. Because of curvature of the track,

signal J177.3 can first be seen from the cab of a south-bound locomotive at a point 2,797 feet north of the signal. When the engineer observed the signal he said he thought that it displayed a yellow aspect but he was not certain because of the sun shining on the roundels of the signal. He called to the fireman to verify the aspect. Both the fireman and the brakeman said that the signal could not be observed from their positions in the cab at that time and that they immediately proceeded to the engineer's side. They said they thought that the signal displayed a green aspect. When the train was about 250 feet north of signal J177.3, the members of the crew on the locomotive said they observed that the signal was displaying a red aspect and that the north switch of the siding was lined for entry to the siding. The speed of the train at that time was about 15 miles per hour. The engineer immediately made an emergency brake application. The speed of the train was reduced to about 10 miles per hour when the collision occurred. The engineer, the fireman, and the brakeman said that they did not observe anyone near the switch or the rear end of Extra 2528 South before the accident occurred.

Signal J177.3 was tested after repairs were made to circuit wiring damaged in the accident and it was found to function properly. The signal was last tested before the accident occurred on June 12, 1957, and it functioned properly at that time. No reports regarding difficulty in distinguishing the aspects displayed by that signal because of sunshine were received by the carrier prior to the time the accident occurred.

Signal J177.3 was struck and moved slightly out of alignment during wrecking operations and, as a result, the effects of sun shining on the roundels under conditions which existed at the time the accident occurred could not be observed.

No. 63 passed signal J175.3 which indicated Proceed-preparing-to-stop-at-next-signal. Under the rules of the carrier No. 63 was then required to be operated in such manner that it could be stopped before passing signal J177.3. When No. 63 passed signal J177.3, which indicated Stop-and-proceed, the train was required to be operated at restricted speed throughout the entire block. Under the rules, the train should have been stopped short of the improperly lined siding-switch.

- 9 -

Cause

This accident was caused by failure to operate the following train in accordance with signal indications.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-third day of September, 1957.

By the Commission, Commissioner Tuggle.

HAROLD D. Mc COY,
SECRETARY.

(SEAL)