

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2699
THE ILLINOIS CENTRAL SYSTEM
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
NEAR SALINE, ILL., ON
MAY 20, 1943

SUMMARY

Railroad: Illinois Central
Date: May 20, 1943
Location: Saline, Ill.
Kind of accident: Head-end collision
Trains involved: Freight : Freight
Train numbers: Extra 1345 South : First 72
Engine numbers: 1345 : 8000
Consist: 94 cars, caboose : 79 cars, caboose
Speed: Standing : 30-35 m. p. n.
Operation: Timetable and train orders
Track: Single; tangent; 0.3 percent
ascending grade northward
Weather: Dense fog
Time: About 6:18 a. m.
Casualties: 1 killed; 1 injured
Cause: Accident caused by failure to obey
right-of-track order
Recommendation: That the Illinois Central establish
an adequate block system on the
line on which this accident occurred

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2699

IN THE MATTER OF MAKING ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORTS
UNDER THE ACCIDENT REPORTS ACT OF MAY 3, 1910.

THE ILLINOIS CENTRAL SYSTEM

June 15, 1943.

Accident near Saline, Ill., on May 20, 1943, caused by
failure to obey a right-of-track order.

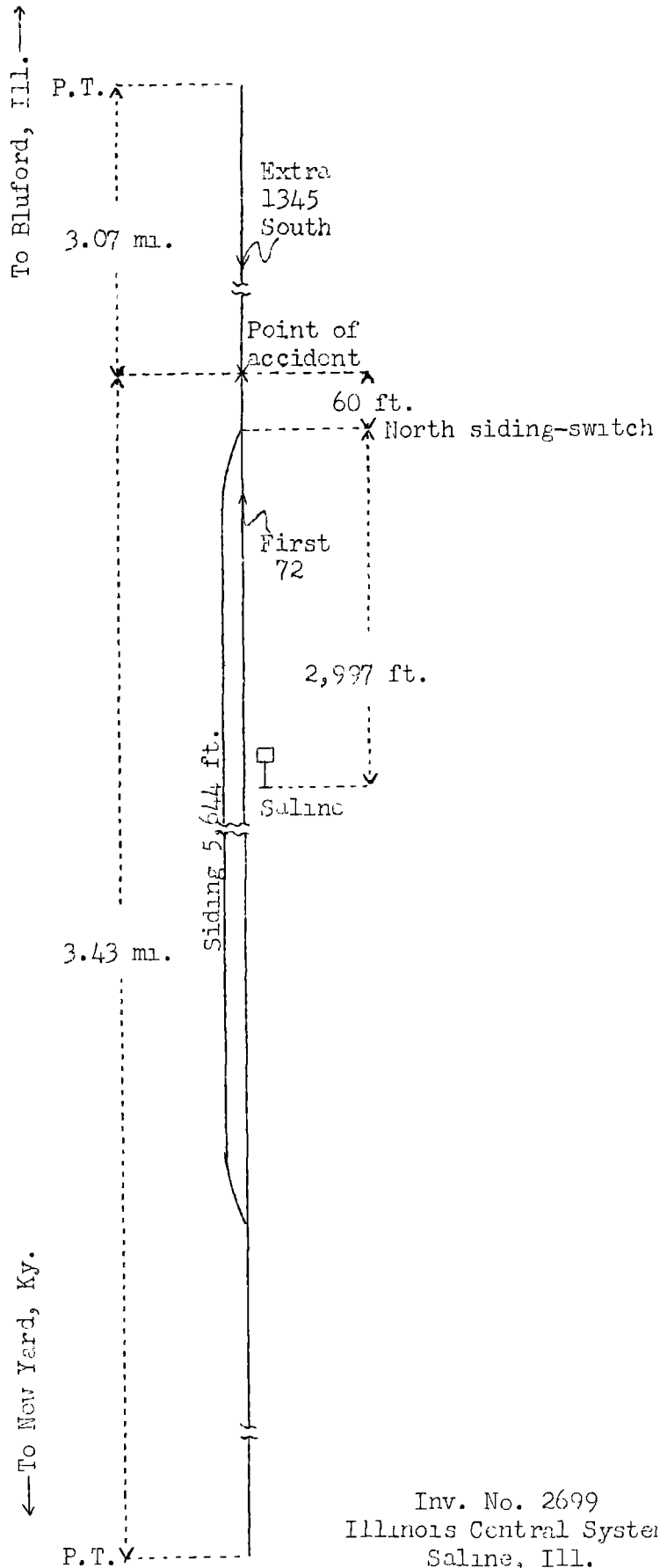
REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On May 20, 1943, there was a head-end collision between two freight trains on the line of the Illinois Central System near Saline, Ill., which resulted in the death of one employee and the injury of one employee. This accident was investigated in conjunction with a representative of the Illinois Commerce Commission.

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.

○	Bluford, Ill.	44.20 mi.
○	Delta	1.63 mi.
X	Point of accident	0.57 mi.
○	Saline	6.70 mi.
○	Abbott	15.20 mi.
○	Reevesville, Ill.	58.70 mi.
○	New Yard, Ky.	



Inv. No. 2699
 Illinois Central System
 Saline, Ill.
 May 20, 1943

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the St. Louis Division designated as the Bluford District and extending between New Yard, Ky., and Bluford, Ill., 127 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. There is no block system in use. At Saline a siding 5,644 feet in length parallels the main track on the west. The north switch of this siding is 2,997 feet north of the station. The accident occurred on the main track at a point 60 feet north of the north siding-switch. Approaching from the south the track is tangent 3.43 miles to the point of accident and 3.07 miles beyond. At the point of accident the grade for north-bound trains is 0.3 percent ascending.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

S-71. A train is superior to another train by right, class or direction.

Right is conferred by train order; class and direction by time-table.

Right is superior to class or direction.

* * *

204. * * *

Trainmen and firemen must read and be familiar with the contents of train orders and, should there be occasion to do so, remind conductors or engineers of the contents thereof,
* * *

FORMS OF TRAIN ORDERS.

* * *

S-C

Giving Right Over an Opposing Train.

* * *

(2) Extra 37 east has right over No 3
F to A.

The regular train must not go beyond the point last named until the extra train has arrived, unless directed by train order to do so.

* * *

* * *

The maximum authorized speed for the north-bound train involved was 40 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

Extra 1345 South, a south-bound freight train, consisted of engine 1345, 17 loaded and 77 empty cars and a caboos. At Bluford, 46.4 miles north of Saline, the crew received a clearance card and copies of three train orders, of which one was train order No. 12 reading in part as follows:

Eng 1345 run Extra Bluford to
Reevesville has right over * * *
first and second 72 engs 8000 and
8002 Bluford to Saline * * *.

Extra 1345 departed from Bluford at 2:25 a. m., according to the dispatcher's record of movement of trains, and passed Delta, 2.2 miles north of Saline and the last open office, at 5:50 a. m. When this train reached a point about 1 mile north of Saline the rear coupler of the twentieth car failed. The engine moved the first 20 cars southward and stopped on the main track about 6:18 a. m., with the front of the engine 60 feet north of the north siding-switch at Saline. Immediately afterward the engine was struck by First 72.

First 72, a north-bound second-class freight train, consisted of engine 8000, 69 loaded and 10 empty cars and a caboos. At Reevesville, 21.9 miles south of Saline, the crew received a clearance card and copies of five train orders, of which one was train order No. 12. This train departed from Reevesville at 5:10 a. m., according to the dispatcher's record of movement of trains, 2 hours 1 minute late, passed Abbott, 6.7 miles south of Saline and the last open office, at 6:05 a. m., 2 hours 6 minutes late, passed the north siding-switch at Saline, where it was required to wait unless Extra 1345 was into clear, and while moving at an estimated speed of 30 to 55 miles per hour it collided with Extra 1345.

The force of the impact moved engine 1345 backward 112 feet. The front end of each engine was badly damaged. The rear truck of the tender of engine 1345 was derailed. The first four cars of Extra 1345 and the eighth to sixteenth cars, inclusive, of First 72, were derailed and badly damaged.

There was a dense fog at the time of the accident, which occurred about 6:18 a. m.

The employee killed was the front brakeman of First 72, and the employee injured was the engineer of First 72.

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the accident, the average daily movement in the vicinity of the point of accident was 22.03 trains.

Discussion

The rules governing operation on this line provide that an extra train may be made superior to opposing regular trains by a right-of-track train order.

The crews of both trains held copies of train order No. 12, which gave Extra 1345 South right over First 72 Bluford to Saline. First 72 was required not to pass the fouling point of the north siding-switch at Saline unless Extra 1345 was into clear on the siding. When Extra 1345 was about 1 mile north of Saline, a service brake-pipe reduction was made to control the speed to enter the siding and an undesired emergency application of the brakes occurred. This resulted in the failure of the rear coupler of the twentieth car, and the train parted. The engine moved the first 20 cars southward and had just stopped on the main track with the front of the engine 60 feet north of the north siding-switch at Saline when it was struck by First 72.

As the front portion of Extra 1345 was approaching the north siding-switch the speed was about 5 miles per hour. The engineer saw the reflection of the headlight of the engine of First 72 about 1,000 feet distant, and soon afterward he saw a member of the crew of that train jump from the engine. The engineer of Extra 1345 stopped the engine and cars by an emergency application of the brakes just before the collision occurred.

About 1 hour 20 minutes before the accident occurred the members of the crew of First 72 received copies of train order No. 12 at Reevesville, 21.9 miles south of Saline, and they understood that their train was required to stop clear of the fouling point of the north siding-switch at Saline unless Extra 1345 was into clear on the siding. As First 72 was approaching Saline the speed was about 40 miles per hour. The fireman was on the deck of the engine and the engineer and the front brakeman were maintaining a lookout ahead. There was no condition of the engine that distracted the attention of these employees or obscured their vision. Because of dense fog, the view of the track ahead in this vicinity was restricted to a distance of about 1,000 feet. The brakes of First 72 had been tested and they functioned properly en route. The engineer saw the reflection of the headlight of the engine of Extra 1345 when his engine was about 1,000 feet south of the north siding-switch. He immediately called a warning to the front brakeman and the fireman, and moved the brake valve

to emergency position. The speed of First 72 was about 30 or 35 miles per hour when the enginemen jumped from the engine just before the collision occurred. The engineer said that after his train passed Abbott, 6.7 miles south of Saline, he read a train order which he received at that point and then forgot the provisions of train order No. 12. The fireman said he was expecting the engineer to control the speed of the train in such manner that it could be stopped short of the fouling point of the north siding-switch, but he was engaged in tending the fire and was not aware that his train had reached the vicinity of Saline until just before the accident occurred. It could not be determined why the front brakeman failed to warn the engineer, as he was killed in the accident. The conductor, the flagman and a trainmaster were in the caboose as First 72 was approaching Saline. The conductor said that soon after the rear of his train passed the south siding-switch he realized that Extra 1345 was not into clear and he opened the conductor's air valve, but this action was not taken soon enough to avert the accident.

In the territory where this accident occurred, trains are operated by timetable and train orders only. If an adequate block system had been in use, the crew of First 72 would have received additional information that an opposing train was closely approaching Saline, and this accident would have been averted. The carrier has an automatic block-signal system in operation between points 3.1 and 18.1 miles south of Saline.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure to obey a right-of-track order.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Illinois Central System establish an adequate block system on the line on which this accident occurred.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this fifteenth day of June, 1943.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.