

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2636
THE ILLINOIS CENTRAL SYSTEM
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
NEAR TATUM, MISS., ON
OCTOBER 15, 1942

SUMMARY

Railroad: Illinois Central
Date: October 15, 1942
Location: Tatum, Miss.
Kind of accident: Head-end collision
Trains involved: Work : Freight
Train numbers: Work Extra 2033 : Extra 1205 South
Engine numbers: 2033 : 1205
Consist: Caboose, 22 cars : 69 cars, caboose
Speed: 15 m. p. h. : 15-25 m. p. h.
Operation: Timetable and train orders
Track: Single; tangent; grade
practically level
Weather: Clear
Time: About 5:55 p. m.
Casualties: 1 killed; 3 injured
Cause: Accident caused by lap of authority
between two opposing extra trains
Recommendation: That the Illinois Central System
establish an adequate block-signal
system on the line involved in
this accident

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2636

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

THE ILLINOIS CENTRAL SYSTEM

December 23, 1942.

Accident near Tatum, Miss., on October 15, 1942, caused
by lap of authority between two opposing extra trains.

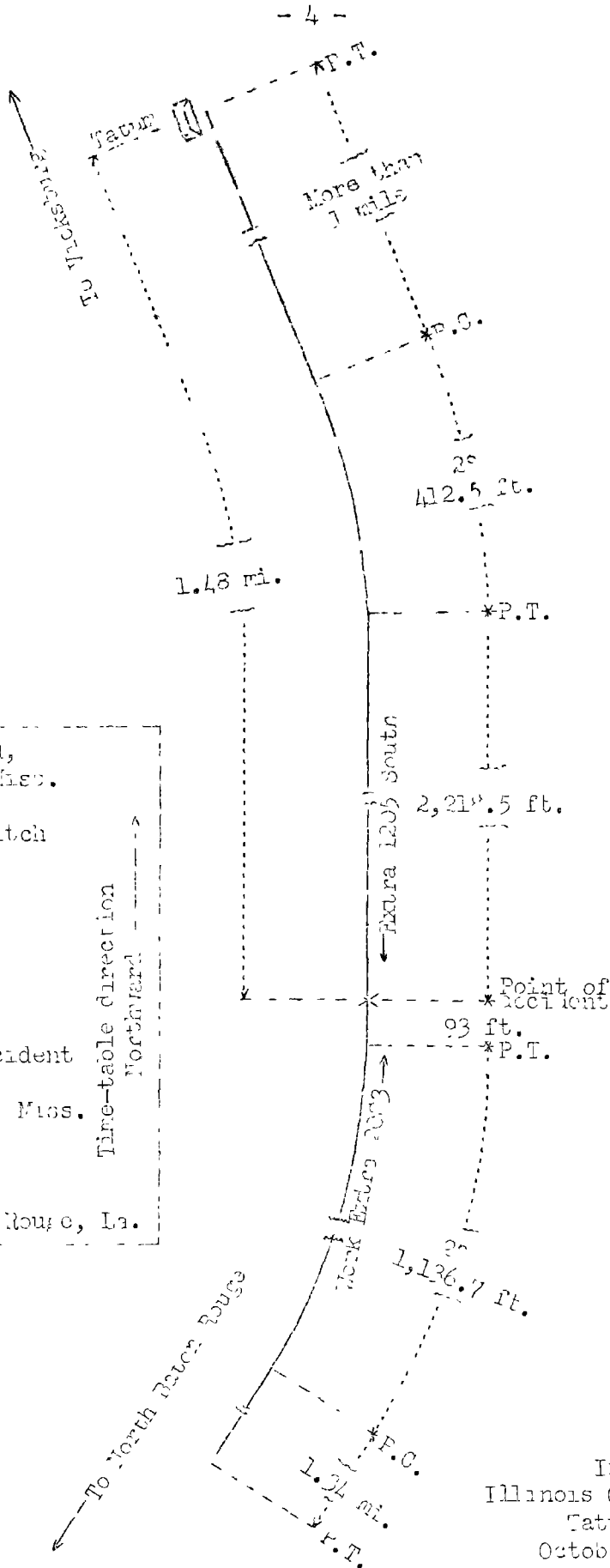
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On October 15, 1942, there was a head-end collision between a work train and a freight train on the line of the Illinois Central System near Tatum, Miss., which resulted in the death of one employee and the injury of three employees.

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.

○	Front Yard, Vicksburg, Miss.	0.60 mi.
○	Junction Switch	82.50 mi.
○	Crosby	7.90 mi.
○	Gloster	4.30 mi.
○	Tatum	1.48 mi.
X	Point of Accident	2.82 mi.
○	Centreville, Miss.	9.30 mi.
○	Forwood, La.	32.90 mi.
○	North Baton Rouge, La.	



Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on the Vicksburg District, which extends between Junction Switch, Vicksburg, Miss., and North Baton Rouge, La., a distance of 142.2 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. The accident occurred on the main track at a point 1.48 miles south of the station at Tatum. Approaching from the north there are, in succession, a tangent more than 1 mile in length, a 2° curve to the right 412.5 feet in length and a tangent 2,218.5 feet to the point of accident. Approaching from the south there are, in succession, a tangent 1.34 miles in length, a 2° curve to the left 1,136.7 feet in length and a tangent 93 feet to the point of accident. The grade for south-bound trains is, successively, 0.78 percent descending 1,400 feet, 0.2 percent ascending 200 feet, 0.794 percent ascending 1,400 feet and level 200 feet to the point of accident. The grade for north-bound trains is, successively, 0.55 percent ascending 400 feet, 0.15 percent descending 200 feet, 0.563 percent descending 1,900 feet and 0.092 percent ascending 1,500 feet to the point of accident.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

DEFINITIONS.

* * *

Extra Train.--A train not authorized by time-table schedule. It may be designated as -

Extra -- for any extra train except * * * work extra;

* * *

Work Extra -- for work train extra.

* * *

S-87. * * *

Extra trains * * * will be governed by train orders with respect to opposing extra trains.

204. Train orders must be addressed to those who are to execute them, naming the place at which each is to receive his copy. * * *

* * *

FORMS OF TRAIN ORDERS.

* * *

E

Time Orders

* * *

- (3) No 1 and No 3 wait at N until 959 a m
* * *

The train, or trains named must not pass the designated points before the time given. Other trains receiving the order are required to run with respect to the time specified at the designated points * * *

* * *

S-H

Work Extra

- (1) Eng 292 works extra 6 45 a m
until 5 45 p m between D and E.

The work extra must, whether standing or moving, protect itself against extra trains within the working limits in both directions as prescribed by the rules. The time of regular trains must be cleared.

This may be modified by adding:

* * *

- (3) Not protecting against extra trains.

* * *

- (4) Work extra 292 clears, or protects against, Extra 76 between D and E after 2 10 p m.

* * *

Whenever extra trains are run over working limits they must be given a copy of the order sent to the work extra. Should the working order instruct a work extra to not protect against extra trains in one or both directions, extra trains must protect against the work extra; if the order indicates that the work extra is protecting itself against other trains, they will run expecting to find the work extra protecting itself.

* * *

The maximum authorized speed for freight trains is 40 miles per hour and for work trains, 30 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

At Gloster, 4.3 miles north of Tatum, the crew of Work Extra 2083 received a clearance card and copies of five train orders, of which one was train order No. 222, Form 19, reading in part as follows:

Eng 2083 works extra 601 am
until 1159 pm between Gloster
and Norwood protecting against
* * * Ex 1205 South * * *
Extra 1205 South wait at Gloster
until 1130 am

Norwood is 13.6 miles south of Tatum. At Centreville, 4.3 miles south of Tatum, the crew received a clearance card and two train orders, of which one was train order No. 291, Form 19, reading as follows:

No 173 and southward extra
trains wait at Gloster until
801 pm

Work Extra 2083, consisting of engine 2083, a caboose, 3 loaded and 19 empty cars, in the order named, departed northward from Centreville about 5:45 p. m., according to the statement of the conductor, and while moving at an estimated speed of 15 miles per hour it collided with Extra 1205 South at a point 1.48 miles south of the station at Tatum.

Extra 1205 South, a south-bound freight train, consisted at the time of the accident of engine 1205, 30 loaded and 39 empty cars and a caboose. At Freight Yard, 95.3 miles north

of Tatum, the crew received a clearance card and copies of five train orders, of which one was train order No. 231, Form 19, reading in part as follows:

Eng 1205 run extra Junction Switch
to North Baton Rouge * * *

Extra 1205 South departed from Junction Switch, 94.7 miles north of Tatum, at 8:50 a. m., according to the dispatcher's record of movement of trains. At Harriston, 46.8 miles north of Tatum, the crew received a clearance card and copies of six train orders, of which one was train order No. 222, previously quoted. Extra 1205 did not receive a copy of train order No. 291. Extra 1205 departed from Harriston at 1:55 p. m., departed from Crosby, 12.2 miles north of Tatum and the last open office, at 4:48 p. m. and while moving at an estimated speed of 15 to 25 miles per hour it collided with Work Extra 2083.

Engine 2083 was moved backward about 40 feet by the impact. The front end was badly damaged and the boiler was moved on its frame. The main and side rods and the main frame were bent, and the deck castings were broken. The tender frame was broken, both trucks were detached and destroyed, and the cistern was punctured. The caboose was demolished. The first and second cars to the rear of the caboose were derailed and badly damaged. The front truck of the third car to the rear of the caboose was derailed. The front end of engine 1205 was badly damaged. The engine truck was demolished, the front end of the main frame was broken, and both main rods were bent. The tender frame was bent, both trucks were detached and destroyed and the cistern was considerably damaged. The first to the tenth cars, inclusive, were derailed and stopped in various positions across the track. Of these cars, five were demolished and the others were badly damaged. The front truck of the eleventh car was derailed. The wreckage was confined within a distance of 300 feet.

It was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 5:55 p. m.

The employee killed was the flagman of Work Extra 2083. The employees injured were the engineer, the conductor and the front brakeman of Extra 1205 South.

Data

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the accident, the average daily movement in the vicinity of the point of accident was 9.9 trains.

Discussion

The operating rules on the line involved provide that extra trains will be governed by train orders with respect to opposing extra trains. Train orders must be addressed to those who are to execute them.

The crews of the trains involved held copies of train order No. 222, which authorized Work Extra 2083 to work between Norwood and Gloster and required it to protect against Extra 1205 South. Train order No. 231 authorized the movement of Extra 1205 South from Junction Switch to North Baton Rouge and this train departed from Crosby, 7.9 miles north of Gloster and the last open office north of the point of accident, at 4:48 p. m. About 5:42 p. m. the train dispatcher was informed that Work Extra 2083 was at Centreville, 8.6 miles south of Gloster and the last open office south of the point of accident, and required authority to move northward to Gloster. The dispatcher issued train order No. 291, which required south-bound extra trains and No. 173, a south-bound second-class schedule, to wait at Gloster until 8:01 p. m. This order was sent to Crosby for delivery to south-bound extra trains and No. 173, and to Centreville for delivery to Work Extra 2083. At the time this order was issued Extra 1205 South had passed Crosby. The crew of Work Extra 2083 received a clearance card and copies of order No. 291, and this train departed from Centreville en route to Gloster at 5:15 p. m. This resulted in a lap of authority of the trains involved as Extra 1205 South had passed the last open office where its authority to proceed could have been restricted, and had not arrived at Centreville at the time order No. 291 was issued.

From an engine moving in either direction in the vicinity of the point of accident, the view of a train approaching from the opposite direction was restricted to a distance of about 1,000 feet, because of embankments and vegetation adjacent to the track and track curvature. Action to stop their respective trains was taken by the engineers, but the distance was not sufficient for either train to stop short of the point of collision.

According to the statement of the train dispatcher involved, he understood the rules required that the movement of opposing extra trains must be authorized by train order and that such orders must be sent to all trains affected. He thought Extra 1205 had arrived at Centreville at the time he issued order No. 291, although he had received no report that it had arrived, and he said he forgot to ask whether it had arrived. At the time he issued order No. 291 there were several

movements requiring the issuance of train orders, and there was considerable confusion because the dispatcher's telephone circuit was permitted to be used for business other than the handling of trains.

On the line involved in this accident trains are operated by timetable and train orders only. If an adequate block system had been in use, this accident would not have occurred.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by a lap of authority between two opposing extra trains.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Illinois Central System establish an adequate block-signal system on the line involved in this accident.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-third day of December, 1942.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.