

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

REPORT NO. 3698
THE MINNEAPOLIS & ST. LOUIS RAILWAY COMPANY
IN RE ACCIDENT
AT WASECA, MINN., ON
JULY 18, 1956

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SUMMARY

Date: July 18, 1956

Railroad: Minneapolis & St. Louis

Location: Waseca, Minn.

Kind of accident: Rear-end collision

Trains involved: Freight : Passenger

Train numbers: 95 : Passenger Extra 28 West

Locomotive numbers: Diesel-electric units 405, 408, 407, and 210 : Diesel-electric mail-baggage unit GE-28

Consists: One Diesel-electric unit in tow, 47 cars, caboose : 1 car

Estimated speeds: 2-3 m. p. h. : 10 m. p. h.

Operation: Timetable and train orders; yard limits

Track: Single; tangent; level

Weather: Foggy

Time: 4:35 a. m.

Casualties: 5 injured

Cause. Failure properly to control speed of following train moving within yard limits

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT NO. 3698

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

THE MINNEAPOLIS & ST. LOUIS RAILWAY COMPANY

August 24, 1956

Accident at Waseca, Minn., on July 18, 1956, caused by
failure properly to control the speed of the
following train moving within yard limits.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

CLARKE, Commissioner:

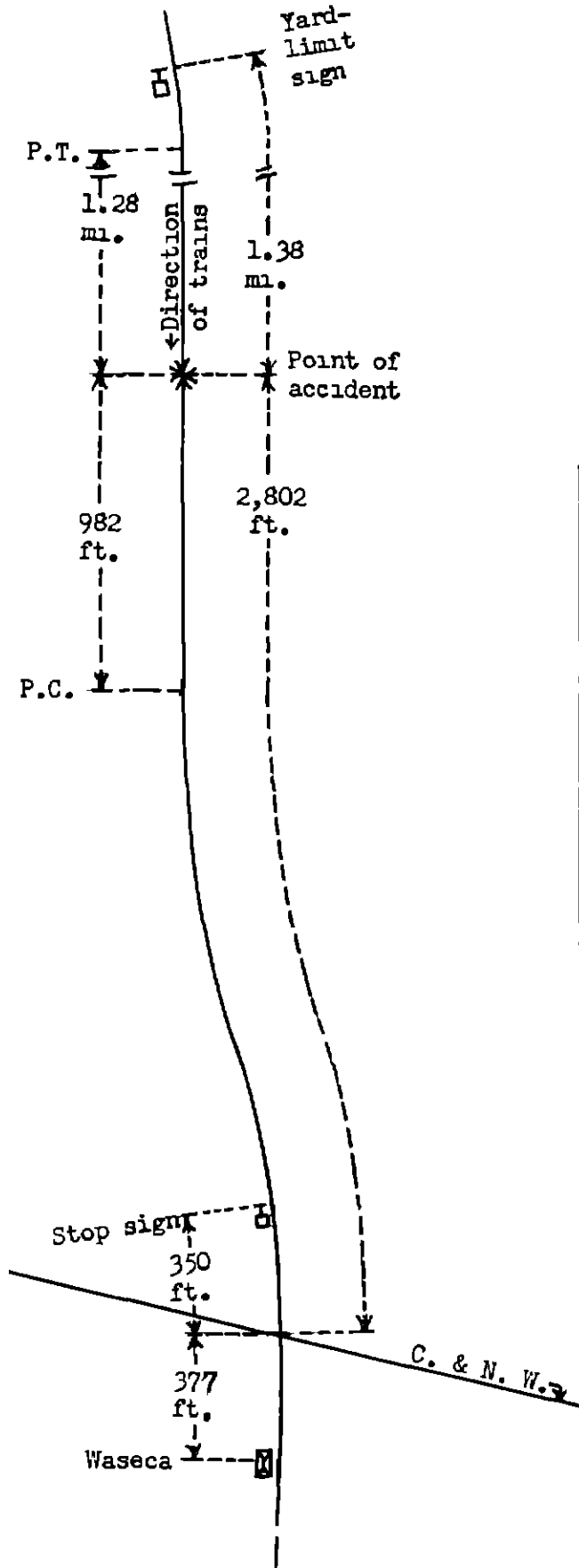
On July 18, 1956, there was a rear-end collision between a freight train and a passenger train on the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway at Waseca, Minn., which resulted in the injury of three passengers, one express messenger, and one train-service employee. This accident was investigated in conjunction with a representative of the Minnesota Railroad and Warehouse Commission.

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

↑ To Albert Lea, Minn.

← To Minneapolis, Minn.



•	Albert Lea, Minn.
	6.8 mi.
•	Manchester
	5.9 mi.
•	Hartland
	6.2 mi.
•	New Richland
	5.8 mi.
•	Otisco
	6.8 mi.
•	Waseca
	(Point of accident)
	67.9 mi.
•	Hopkins
	7.8 mi.
•	Minneapolis, Minn.

Report No. 3698
 Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway
 Waseca, Minn.
 July 19, 1956

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the railroad extending between Albert Lea and Minneapolis, Minn., 107.2 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. At Waseca, 31.5 miles west of Albert Lea, a single-track line of the Chicago and North Western Railway crosses the line of the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway at grade. The crossing is 377 feet east of the station. The accident occurred on the main track within yard limits at a point 1.38 miles west of the east yard-limit sign and 2,802 feet east of the C. & N.W. crossing at Waseca. The main track is tangent throughout a distance of 1.28 miles immediately east of the point of accident and 982 feet westward. The grade is practically level at the point of accident.

A stop sign governing west-bound movements on the line of the M. & St. L. is located 350 feet east of the C. & N.W. crossing.

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

DEFINITIONS

Restricted Speed--Proceed prepared to stop short of train, engine, obstruction or switch not properly lined.

86. Unless otherwise provided, an inferior train must clear a first class train, or a train made superior by train order, in the same direction, at the time such train is due to leave next station in the rear where time is shown in timetable or train order * * *.

91. Unless some form of block signals is used, trains in the same direction must keep at least ten minutes apart.

93. * * * All trains and engines (except first class trains) must approach and pass through * * * yard limits at restricted speed. * * * extra passenger trains must proceed under this rule the same as an extra freight train.

93-a. When not on the time of first class trains, trains and engines may occupy the main track within * * * yard limits without protection, except during fogs, storms, or other unusual weather conditions, when such trains will be protected as prescribed by Rule 99.

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Rule 93-a will not relieve trainmen from responsibility if they fail to protect their train during weather conditions named.

93-b. Rule 93-a does not relieve any train (except first class trains) of approaching and passing through * * * yard limits at restricted speed, and in all cases the responsibility for safety will rest with the crew of the approaching train regardless of any and all conditions.

99. When a train is moving under circumstances in which it may be overtaken by another train, the flagman must drop lighted fusees at proper intervals and take such other action as may be necessary to insure full protection. * * *

FORMS OF TRAIN ORDERS

B

Directing a Train to Pass or Run Ahead of Another Train

* * *

(3) Extra 448 East run ahead of No 6 M to B.

The first-named train will run ahead of the second-named train between the designated points.

If a train is delayed after receiving authority to run ahead of a superior train, it may allow the superior train to pass and the train dispatcher will be notified at first open office.

G

Extra Trains

* * *

(4) Eng 350 run extra leaving A on Thursday Feb 17 as follows with right over all trains

Leave A	11 30 p m
C	12 25 a m
E	1 47 a m
Arrive F	2 22 a m

This order may be varied by specifying the kind of extra and the particular trains over which the extra shall or shall not have right.

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An extra authorized by this form of train order must not pass the designated points before the times given and must move with * * * yard limits the same as any other extra train.

Trains over which the extra is thus given right must clear the extra the same as an inferior class train is required to clear a first class train.

* * *

The maximum authorized speeds are 50 miles per hour for passenger trains and 45 miles per hour for freight trains.

Description of Accident

No. 95, a west-bound second-class freight train, consisted of Diesel-electric units 405, 408, 407, and 210, coupled in multiple-unit control, one Diesel-electric unit in tow, 47 cars, and a caboose. At Albert Lea the members of the crew received, among others, copies of train order No. 32 reading in part as follows:

Eng 28 run Psgr Extra leaving Albert Lea on
Wednesday July 18 as follows with right over
all trains except No 20 Leave
Albert Lea 320 AM
Manchester 331 AM
Hartland 341 AM
New Richland 351 AM
Otisco 401 AM
Waseca 415 AM
* * *

and copies of train order No. 15 reading as follows:

No 95 Eng 405 run ahead of Psgr Extra 28 West
Albert Lea to Hopkins

Manchester, Hartland, New Richland, Otisco, and Hopkins are located, respectively, 6.8 miles, 12.7 miles, 18.9 miles, 24.7 miles, and 99.4 miles west of Albert Lea. This train departed from Albert Lea at 3:40 a. m. It entered the siding at New Richland and met Extra 413 East and passed Passenger Extra 28 West. It then proceeded westward, and while moving at a speed of 2 or 3 miles per hour the rear end was struck by Passenger Extra 28 West at a point 1.38 miles west of the east yard-limit sign and 2,802 feet east of the C. & N.W. crossing at Waseca.

Passenger Extra 28 West, a west-bound passenger train, consisted of Diesel-electric mail-baggage unit GE-28 and one coach, in the order named. Unit GE-28 is provided with a control compartment at the front, a mail compartment in the center, and a baggage compartment at the rear. At Albert Lea the members of the crew received, among others, copies of train orders Nos. 32 and 15. This train departed from Albert Lea at 3:30 a. m. It entered the siding at New Richland and met Extra 413 East, entered the main track and moved east of the west siding-switch and permitted No. 95 to pass, and then proceeded westward. While it was moving at a speed of about 10 miles per hour it struck the rear end of No. 95.

No equipment of either train was derailed. The rear end of the caboose of No. 95 and the front end of the first unit of Passenger Extra 28 West were somewhat damaged.

The engineer of Passenger Extra 28 West was injured.

The weather was foggy and it was daybreak at the time of the accident, which occurred about 4:35 a. m.

Discussion

On the day of the accident the equipment of Passenger Extra 28 West arrived at Albert Lea as No. 3, a west-bound passenger train. The advertised time for this train at stations west of Albert Lea is earlier than the schedule time contained in the employees' timetable, and the train arriving at Albert Lea as No. 3 is regularly operated as a passenger extra beyond that point. This train makes frequent local stops, and at the time train order No. 15 was issued it was anticipated that No. 95 would leave Albert Lea ahead of Passenger Extra 28 West and would not be overtaken by that train. No. 95 had not departed from Albert Lea at the time Passenger Extra 28 West was ready to leave, and Passenger Extra 28 West preceded No. 95 from that station.

Passenger Extra 28 West entered the siding at New Richland to meet Extra 413 East. The train of Extra 413 East did not clear between the siding switches, and Passenger Extra 28 West stopped at the west siding-switch. While the train was standing at this point the conductor saw the headlight of No. 95. He instructed the engineer that after entering the main track he was to move east of the west siding-switch and permit No. 95 to pass. After No. 95 passed, Passenger Extra 28 West proceeded westward. There was no operator on duty at New Richland, and neither crew made a record

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of the time of arrival or departure at that station. The engineer of Passenger Extra 28 West said that his train departed approximately 10 minutes after No. 95 passed the west siding-switch.

As No. 95 was approaching Waseca the enginemen and the front brakeman were on the locomotive. The conductor and the flagman were in the caboose. The engineer said that he began to reduce speed in the vicinity of the east yard-limit sign. He said that he reduced the speed to about 20 miles per hour by use of the automatic brakes, and then prepared to stop at the stop sign east of the C. & N.W. crossing by use of the independent brake. The brakes became applied in emergency as a result of the collision immediately before the train stopped. The engineer said that in the vicinity of Waseca his range of vision was considerably restricted by fog. He said that the density of the fog varied and that his range of vision was restricted to approximately 600 feet at some points and to less than that distance at other points. The conductor and the flagman said that as the train approached Waseca their range of vision was restricted to a distance of about 1,500 feet. When the rear end of the train reached a point about 1,300 feet east of the point where the accident occurred the conductor lighted a fusee and placed it on the rear platform of the caboose. At this time he could not see the headlight of Passenger Extra 28 West. He first saw the headlight at a distance which he thought was about 200 feet. He immediately picked up the fusee and alighted from the caboose. He said that his train was still in motion at this time and that he was standing approximately 100 feet east of the caboose when the collision occurred. He estimated that the speed of Passenger Extra 28 West was approximately 10 miles per hour when the front end of that train passed him.

After leaving New Richland Passenger Extra 28 West made a station stop at Otisco and then proceeded westward. The engineer was alone in the control compartment at the front of the train, and the conductor and the flagman were in the coach. There was no fireman assigned to the train. The brakes of the train had been tested and had functioned properly when used en route. The engineer said that he began to reduce speed when the train was in the vicinity of the east yard-limit sign at Waseca. He said that as the train approached Waseca his range of vision was restricted by fog to a distance of approximately 450 feet. He said that his train entered a fog bank a short distance east of the point where the accident occurred, and he first saw the fusee on

the rear end of the caboose of No. 95 at a distance which he thought was 40 or 50 feet. When he saw the fusee he immediately made an emergency application of the brakes, sounded a warning on the pneumatic horn, and alighted from the train. He was approximately 45 feet east of the front end of the train when the collision occurred. The conductors of both No. 95 and Passenger Extra 28 West said that the accident occurred at 4:35 a. m. The engineer of Passenger Extra 28 West said that it occurred about 4:45 a. m.

As interpreted by officials of the carrier, train order No. 15 authorized No. 95 to run ahead of Passenger Extra 28 West from Albert Lea to Hopkins, but if No. 95 allowed Passenger Extra 28 West to pass at any point it was no longer authorized to run ahead of that train. According to this interpretation, after Passenger Extra 28 West departed from Albert Lea ahead of No. 95, No. 95 was not authorized to pass or run ahead of that train. The engineer and the conductor of No. 95 and the conductor of Passenger Extra 28 West all said that at the time of the accident they understood that train order No. 15 authorized No. 95 to pass Passenger Extra 28 West at any point between Albert Lea and Hopkins and to run ahead of Passenger Extra 28 West beyond that point.

The rules of this carrier provide that trains or engines occupying the main track within yard limits during fogs or storms must be protected as prescribed by rule No. 99. They also provide that within yard limits all trains except first class trains must be prepared to stop short of a train or an obstruction, and that the responsibility for safety will rest with the crew of the approaching train regardless of conditions. In the instant case the conductor of No. 95 said that he expected Passenger Extra 28 West to move within yard limits at Waseca at restricted speed. The engineer of Passenger Extra 28 West said he thought the protection provided for No. 95 was inadequate under the existing weather conditions.

Cause

This accident was caused by failure properly to control the speed of the following train moving within yard limits.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-fourth day of August, 1956.

By the Commission, Commissioner Clarke.

(SEAL)

HAROLD D. McCOY,
Secretary.