

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

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REPORT NO. 3407  
MISSOURI PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY  
IN FL ACCIDENT  
NEAR BAUKITE JCT., ARK., ON  
JUNE 19, 1951

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SUMMARY

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Date: June 19, 1951

Railroad: Missouri Pacific

Location: Bauxite Jct., Ark.

Kind of accident: Rear-end collision

Equipment involved: Track motor-car : Passenger-  
M-2559 : equipment train

Train number: : Extra 5324 North

Engine number: : 5324

Consist: : 2 cars

Estimated speeds: Standing : 35 m. p. h.

Operation: Signal indications

Tracks: Double; tangent; level

Weather: Clear

Time: 10:25 a. m.

Casualties: 1 killed

Cause: Failure to provide adequate protection  
for movement of track motor-car

Recommendation: That the Missouri Pacific Railroad  
Company provide adequate protection  
for movement of track motor-cars on  
its line

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

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REPORT NO. 3407

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

MISSOURI PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY

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August 3, 1951

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Accident near Bauxite Jct., Ark., on June 19, 1951, caused  
by failure to provide adequate protection for the  
movement of a track motor-car.

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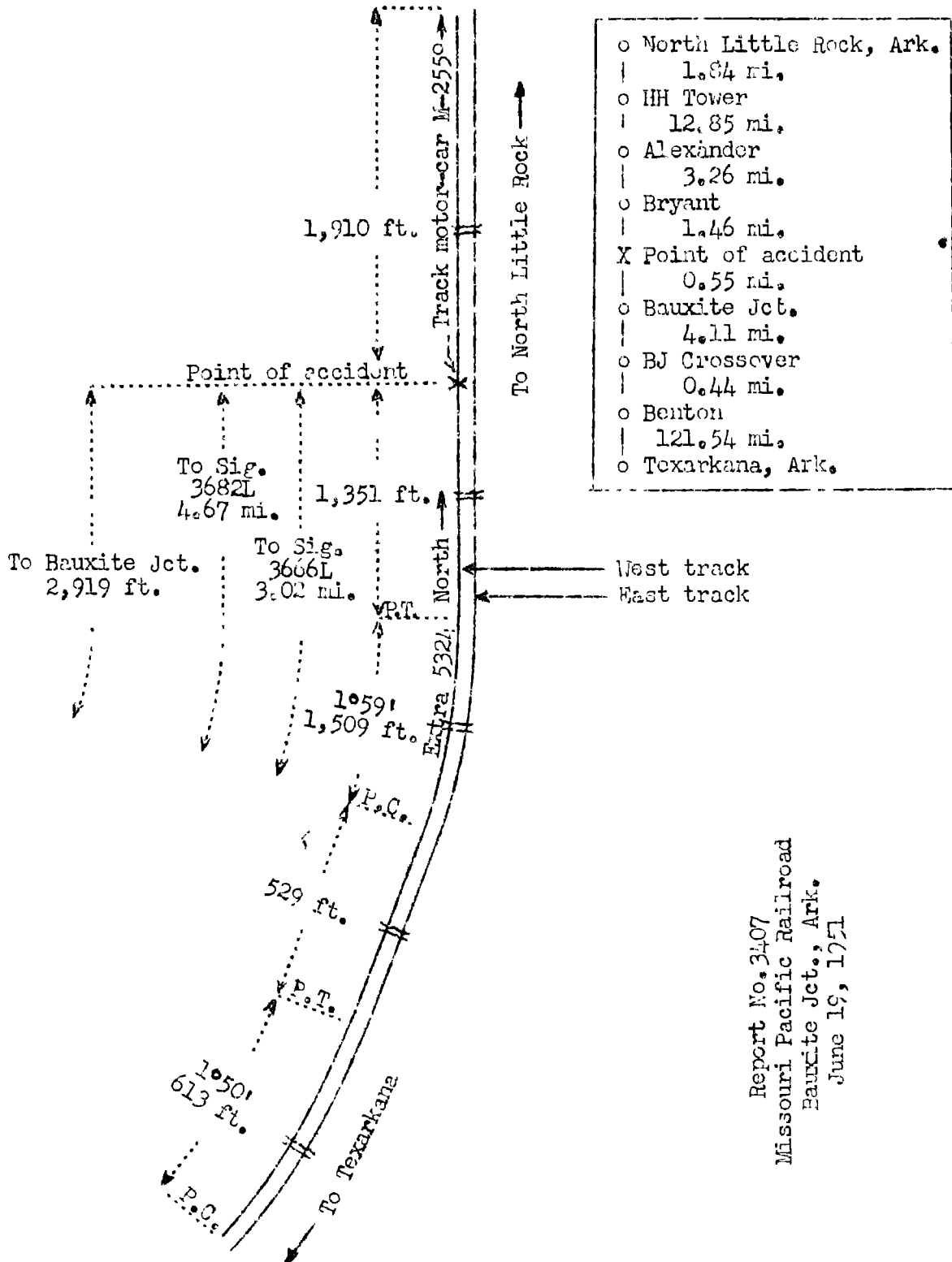
<sup>1</sup>  
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On June 19, 1951, there was a rear-end collision  
between a track motor-car and a passenger-equipment train  
on the Missouri Pacific Railroad near Bauxite Jct., Ark.,  
which resulted in the death of one employee.

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<sup>1</sup>  
Under authority of section 17 (2) of the Interstate Com-  
merce Act the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the  
Commission to Commissioner Patterson for consideration and  
disposition.



Report No. 3407  
Missouri Pacific Railroad  
Bauxite Jct., Ark.  
June 19, 1951

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Arkansas Division extending between Texarkana and North Little Rock, Ark., 146.05 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a double-track line, over which trains moving in either direction on either track are operated by signal indications. The tracks from east to west are designated as east track and west track. The accident occurred on the west track at a point 126.64 miles north of Texarkana and 2,919 feet north of Bauxite Jct. From the south there are, in succession, a 1°50' curve to the left 613 feet in length, a tangent 529 feet, a 1°59' curve to the left 1,509 feet, and a tangent 1,351 feet to the point of accident and 1,910 feet northward. The grade is level at the point of accident.

Semi-automatic signal 3682L and automatic signal 3666L, governing north-bound movements on the west track, are located, respectively, 4.67 miles and 3.02 miles south of the point of accident. These signals are of the color-light type and are continuously lighted. They form part of a traffic-control system which extends between Texarkana and HH Tower, 144.21 miles north of Texarkana.

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

14. Engine Horn or Whistle Signals. \* \* \*

\* \* \*

NOTE.--The signals prescribed are illustrated by "o" for short sounds; "—" for longer sounds. \* \* \*

Sound.

Indication.

\* \* \*

(1) — — o ———

\* \* \*

This signal must \* \* \* be frequently sounded to warn trackmen and other employes when view is restricted by \* \* \* obscure curves \* \* \*

\* \* \*

Rules and Regulations for the Maintenance of Way and Structures read in part as follows:

143. Speed.--The speed of motor cars must not exceed that at which the cars can be stopped within the limit of safety \* \* \*, and must not at any time exceed \* \* \*

Light Inspection Cars, Center

Load

25 miles per hour.

\* \* \*

144. Protection against Trains and Other Cars.--

(a) Care and Caution.--In the operation of cars, foremen and others must move at all times with care and caution necessary for safety, expecting trains at any time without notice and protecting when necessary, using prescribed signals. Care must be exercised to avoid collision with trains or other cars. Alertness and full use of eyes and ears are important.

(b) Operation in Fog, Storm, or at Night.--When necessary to operate car \* \* \* where the view is obstructed in any way \* \* \* special care must be used, and if conditions require, must proceed only under flag protection. In case of doubt or uncertainty, the safe course must be taken.

(c) Train Information.--Upon going to work and as often as necessary thereafter, foreman and other operators of cars shall, when practicable, secure from telegrapher in writing, information showing the approximate time of arrival at the station at which information is secured, of each train moving at that time which may arrive within the following three hours.

This information is for use in planning work in such a way as to minimize delays to traffic, and not as authority to occupy the main track. Main track may be occupied by track cars only by full compliance with all rules.

In territory designated by the Superintendent, where curves may cause excessive delay to operation of cars, special instructions may be issued providing for the furnishing of complete and definite information on trains, to be used by foreman in going to and returning from work. Such information, while positive with reference to trains, does not relieve foreman and others from using care and caution necessary for safety by use of eyes and ears, observance of speed restrictions, and other rules to prevent collision with track cars, obstructions, vehicles at highway crossings, and engines or cars within yard limits.

\* \* \*

(f) One Man Face Rear.--When gang cars are running on main track, at least one man must face the rear and keep lookout for following trains.

\* \* \*

156. Insulation.--Only insulated cars must be used within track circuit limits.

The maximum authorized speed for the passenger-equipment train was 75 miles per hour, but it was restricted to 60 miles per hour on the curve immediately south of the point of accident. The maximum authorized speed for the track motor-car was 25 miles per hour.

#### Description of Accident.

Track motor-car M-2559, occupied by a signal maintainer and a signal helper, departed north-bound from Benton, 121.54 miles north of Texarkana, on the east track about 10 a. m. At a point about 2 miles north of Benton it was removed from the east track and placed on the west track. The motor-car then proceeded northward, and about 10:25 a. m. it stopped at a point 2,919 feet north of Bauxite Jct. Immediately afterward it was struck by Extra 5324 North.

Extra 5324 North, a north-bound passenger-equipment train, consisted of engine 5324 and two coaches. This train passed BJ Crossover, 0.44 mile north of Benton, at 10:19 a. m., passed signals 3682L and 3666L, which displayed aspects to proceed, passed Bauxite Jct. at 10:24 a. m., and while moving at an estimated speed of 35 miles per hour it struck track motor-car M-2559.

Track motor-car M-2559 stopped 70 feet north of the point of accident and against the right-of-way fence on the west side of the track. It was demolished. Extra 5324 North stopped with the front of the engine about 900 feet north of the point of accident. The pilot of the engine was slightly damaged.

The signal maintainer was killed.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 10:25 a. m.

Track motor-car M-2559 was of the 4-wheel type and weighed 540 pounds. It was powered by a 5-8 horse-power gasoline motor and was equipped with 4-wheel brakes. It was insulated to prevent it from shunting track circuits..

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the accident the average daily movement in the vicinity of the point of accident was 35.26 trains.

#### Discussion

In the vicinity of the point of accident trains are operated in either direction on either track by signal indications. Train movements between signal 3682L and HH Tower are controlled by the operator at HH Tower under the direction of the train dispatcher. The operator at HH Tower said that it is customary for the train dispatcher to issue a line-up of train movements about 6:40 a. m. each day as information to the operators of track motor-cars. The operators of track motor-cars in this territory then call the operator at HH Tower at intervals during the day and request a revised line-up or information as to the location of a particular train. When the operator at HH Tower receives such a request, he obtains the desired information from the train dispatcher.

Shortly after 8 a. m. on the day of the accident the signal maintainer at Benton informed the operator at HH Tower that he desired to operate his track motor-car from Benton to Alexander, 9.82 miles north of Benton. The operator instructed him to follow No. 272, a north-bound freight train, from Benton. The operator also gave him a line-up of several south-bound trains which were in the vicinity, but did not mention the movement of Extra 5324 North. The signal maintainer then proceeded to Alexander and returned to Benton on a routine inspection trip. About 9:45 a. m., after the



signal maintainer returned to Benton, the operator at HH Tower informed him that the light was not displayed in a signal at Bryant, 6.56 miles north of Benton. The signal maintainer replied that he would attend to the light, but he did not request a line-up of train movements. The operator understood from this conversation that the signal maintainer did not intend to leave Benton immediately, and he did not offer any information as to train movements. The signal helper said that when the signal maintainer left the telephone he instructed the helper to place the track motor-car on the track and to accompany him to Bryant to inspect a signal. The signal maintainer did not give the helper any information as to expected train movements. These employees departed north-bound from Benton on the east track. About 2 miles north of Benton they placed the track motor-car on the west track because maintenance-of-way employees were surfacing the east track at that point. The signal helper said that as the track motor-car was approaching the point where the accident occurred the speed was about 20 miles per hour. Because of track curvature and vegetation along the track, he did not observe Extra 5324 North until the train was about 1,700 feet distant. He immediately warned the signal maintainer, and he thought that the track motor-car was stopped within a distance of about 275 feet. The collision occurred several seconds later and before the track motor-car could be removed from the track. The signal helper did not hear a warning whistle sounded before he observed Extra 5324 North, but he said he probably could not have heard a warning whistle because of the noise from the track motor-car.

As Extra 5324 North was approaching the point where the accident occurred the speed was about 55 miles per hour. The members of the crew had received no information that the track ahead was occupied by a track motor-car. The enginemen were maintaining a lookout ahead from their positions in the cab of the engine, and the members of the train crew were in various locations in the cars of the train. The brakes of the train had been tested and had functioned properly when used en route. The enginemen said that the prescribed whistle signal was sounded continuously from the time the train entered the curve to the left immediately south of the point of accident until the fireman observed the track motor-car ahead. The fireman thought that at this time the track motor-car was about 1,200 feet distant. He immediately warned the engineer, and the engineer made an emergency application of the brakes and sounded a series of short blasts on the engine whistle. The enginemen said that the speed of the train had been reduced to about 35 miles per hour when the collision occurred.

The rules of this carrier require that the operators of track motor-cars exercise care to avoid collisions with trains or other track motor-cars. They must expect trains to run at any time without notice, and must operate track motor-cars with the caution necessary to insure safety. The rules also require that the operators of track motor-cars will, upon going to work and as often as necessary thereafter, obtain information from telegraphers as to the approximate time of arrival of each train which may arrive within the following 3 hours. In the instant case the signal maintainer did not obtain a line-up of train movements before he departed from Benton on the track motor-car. However, he would have been required to provide the same degree of protection if he had obtained a line-up as when he did not have one. The information contained in a line-up does not relieve the operator of a track motor-car from responsibility for collision. Line-ups are issued as information only and confer no authority over trains or other track motor-cars. Train dispatchers and the members of train crews are not informed when a track motor-car is occupying the main track, and track motor-car operators are not informed when another track motor-car is occupying the main track. Track motor-cars operating in automatic block-signal territory are insulated to prevent them from shunting track circuits, and automatic block-signal systems do not indicate that the track is occupied by a track motor-car.

This carrier's Rules and Regulations for the Maintenance of Way and Structures contain rules which provide that in territory designated by the superintendent, where curves may cause excessive delay in the operation of track motor-cars, special instructions may be issued providing for the furnishing of complete and definite information on trains to the operators of track motor-cars. Such special instructions had not been issued in the territory in which this accident occurred.

Since January 1, 1944, the Commission has investigated 33 collisions, including the present case, which were caused by failure to provide adequate protection for the movement of track motor-cars. These accidents resulted in the death of 64 persons and the injury of 106 persons.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure to provide adequate protection for the movement of a track motor-car.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Missouri Pacific Railroad Company provide adequate protection for the movement of track motor-cars on its line.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this third day of August, 1951.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,  
Secretary.