

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 3143
MISSOURI PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
AT DIAZ, ARK., ON
NOVEMBER 14, 1947

SUMMARY

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Railroad: Missouri Pacific
Date: November 14, 1947
Location: Diaz, Ark.
Kind of accident: Head-end collision
Equipment involved: Engine : Freight train
Train number: : 261
Engine numbers: 1524 : 1501
Consist: : Auxiliary water
car, 27 cars,
caboose
Estimated speed: Standing : 15 m. p. h.
Operation: Timetable and train orders; yard
limits
Track: Single; tangent; level
Weather: Raining
Time: 12:55 p. m.
Casualties: 1 killed; 1 injured
Cause: Failure properly to control speed
of train moving within yard limits

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 3143

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

MISSOURI PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY

December 26, 1947

Accident at Diaz, Ark., on November 14, 1947, caused
by failure properly to control the speed of a
train moving within yard limits.

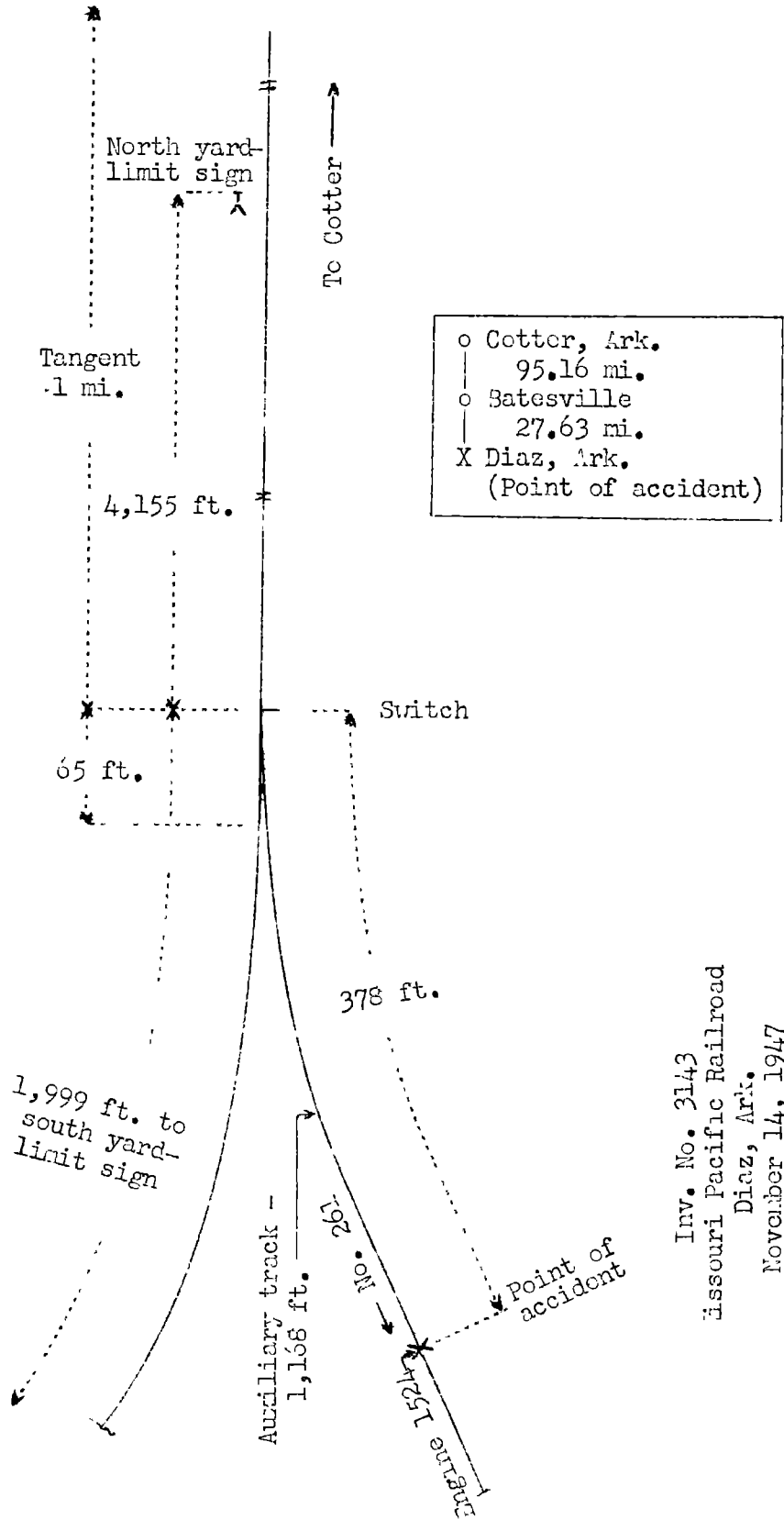
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On November 14, 1947, there was a head-end collision
between a freight train and an engine on the Missouri
Pacific Railroad at Diaz, Ark., which resulted in the
death of one employee, and the injury of one non-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 Patterson for consideration and
disposition.



Inv. No. 3143
Missouri Pacific Railroad
Diaz, Ark.
November 14, 1947

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the White River Division extending between Cotter and Diaz, Ark., 122.79 miles, a single-track line, over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders. There is no block system in use. Within yard limits at Diaz there is an auxiliary track 1,168 feet in length on the east side of the main track. Entry to this track at the north switch is made through a No. 7 turnout. The north switch is 4,155 feet south of the north yard-limit sign and 1,999 feet north of the south yard-limit sign. The accident occurred on the auxiliary track at a point 378 feet south of the north switch. From the north the main track is tangent throughout a distance of about one mile to the north auxiliary-track switch and 65 feet southward. The grade is level.

The switchstand of the north auxiliary-track switch is of the hand-throw, intermediate-stand type, and is located about 7 feet east of the east rail. It is provided with a red oval-shape target and reflector-type lenses. The center of the target is 5 feet 2-11/16 inches above the tops of the ties. When the switch is lined for entry to the auxiliary track a red reflector and a red target are displayed at right angles to the track.

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

DEFINITIONS.

* * *

Fixed Signal.--A signal of fixed location indicating a condition affecting the movement of a train or engine.

NOTE TO DEFINITION OF FIXED SIGNAL.--The definition of a "Fixed Signal" covers such signals as switch, * * *, yard limit signs, * * *

* * *

Restricted Speed.--Proceed prepared to stop short of train, obstruction, or anything that may require the speed of a train or engine to be reduced.

* * *

10. Color Signals.

Color.	Indication.
(a) Red.	Stop.
* * *	

93. * * *

Within yard limits the main track may be used without protecting against second and inferior class, extra trains and engines.

Second and inferior class, extra trains and engines must move within yard limits at restricted speed.

Description of Accident

Engine 1524, headed north, entered the auxiliary track at Diaz at the north switch about 12:40 p. m., to perform switching. About 15 minutes later, while the engine was standing on the auxiliary track, it was struck by No. 261 at a point 378 feet south of the north switch.

No. 261, a south-bound second-class freight train consisting of engine 1501, one auxiliary water car, 27 cars and a caboose, passed Batesville, the last open office, 27.63 miles north of Diaz, at 12:14 p. m., 1 hour 39 minutes late, passed the north yard-limit sign at Diaz, and while moving at an estimated speed of 15 miles per hour it entered the auxiliary-track at the north switch and struck engine 1524.

The force of the impact moved engine 1524 southward a distance of 42 feet. The engine truck of engine 1524, and the engine and four cars of No. 261 were derailed and damaged.

The engineer of No. 261 was killed.

It was raining at the time of the accident, which occurred about 12:55 p. m.

Discussion

About 12:40 p. m. No. 292, a north-bound second-class freight train, stopped on the main track within yard limits at Diaz, with the engine standing immediately south of the north auxiliary-track switch. About 15 minutes later, after

the engine had been detached and had entered the auxiliary track at the north switch to perform switching, it was struck by No. 261, a south-bound second-class freight train, at a point 378 feet south of the auxiliary-track switch, which was lined for entry to the auxiliary track. The enginemen of No. 261 jumped from the engine just before the collision occurred. The engineer was killed.

Immediately before the collision occurred the conductor of No. 292 was in the caboose, the enginemen were on the engine and the flagman and two brakemen were in the vicinity of the engine. These employees were not aware of anything being wrong until the engineer saw the engine of No. 261 enter the auxiliary track at the north switch. Then he sounded an alarm whistle signal and was attempting to move his engine southward when the collision occurred.

As No. 261 was approaching the north yard-limit sign at Diaz the speed was about 40 miles per hour. The enginemen were maintaining a lookout ahead from their respective positions on the engine. The front brakeman was in the brakeman's booth on the tender, and the conductor, the swing brakeman and the flagman were in the caboose. The fireman said that when his engine was in the vicinity of the north yard-limit sign the engineer made a service brake-pipe reduction, which reduced the speed to about 20 miles per hour. This speed was maintained until the engine was in the immediate vicinity of the north auxiliary-track switch, then the fireman saw the cars of No. 292 occupying the main track south of the auxiliary-track switch and he crossed to the engineer's side of the engine and moved the brake valve to emergency position. The speed of No. 261 was about 15 miles per hour when the engine entered the north auxiliary-track switch. The brakes of this train had been tested and had functioned properly en route. The fireman did not observe that the switch was lined for entry to the auxiliary track until his engine entered the turnout.

The accident occurred within yard limits, and, under the rules, No. 261 was required to be operated in such manner that it could be stopped short of a train or an obstruction.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure properly to control the speed of a train moving within yard limits.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-sixth day of December, 1947.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.