

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

REPORT NO. 3679

MISSOURI PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY

IN RE ACCIDENT

NEAR FULTS, ILL., ON

FEBRUARY 28, 1956

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SUMMARY

Date: February 28, 1956

Railroad: Missouri Pacific

Location: Fults, Ill.

Kind of accident: Rear-end collision

Equipment involved: Track motor-car : Passenger train
C-1279

Train number: : 308

Locomotive number: : Diesel-electric
unit 301

Consist: : 7 cars

Estimated speeds: 4 m. p. h. : 18-20 m. p. h.

Operation: Movements with the current of
traffic by signal indications;
movements against the current
of traffic by train orders

Tracks: Double; tangent, level

Weather: Clear

Time: 7:57 a. m.

Casualties: 1 killed

Cause: Failure to take required
precautions in the operation
of a track motor-car

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT NO. 3679

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

MISSOURI PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY

March 30, 1956

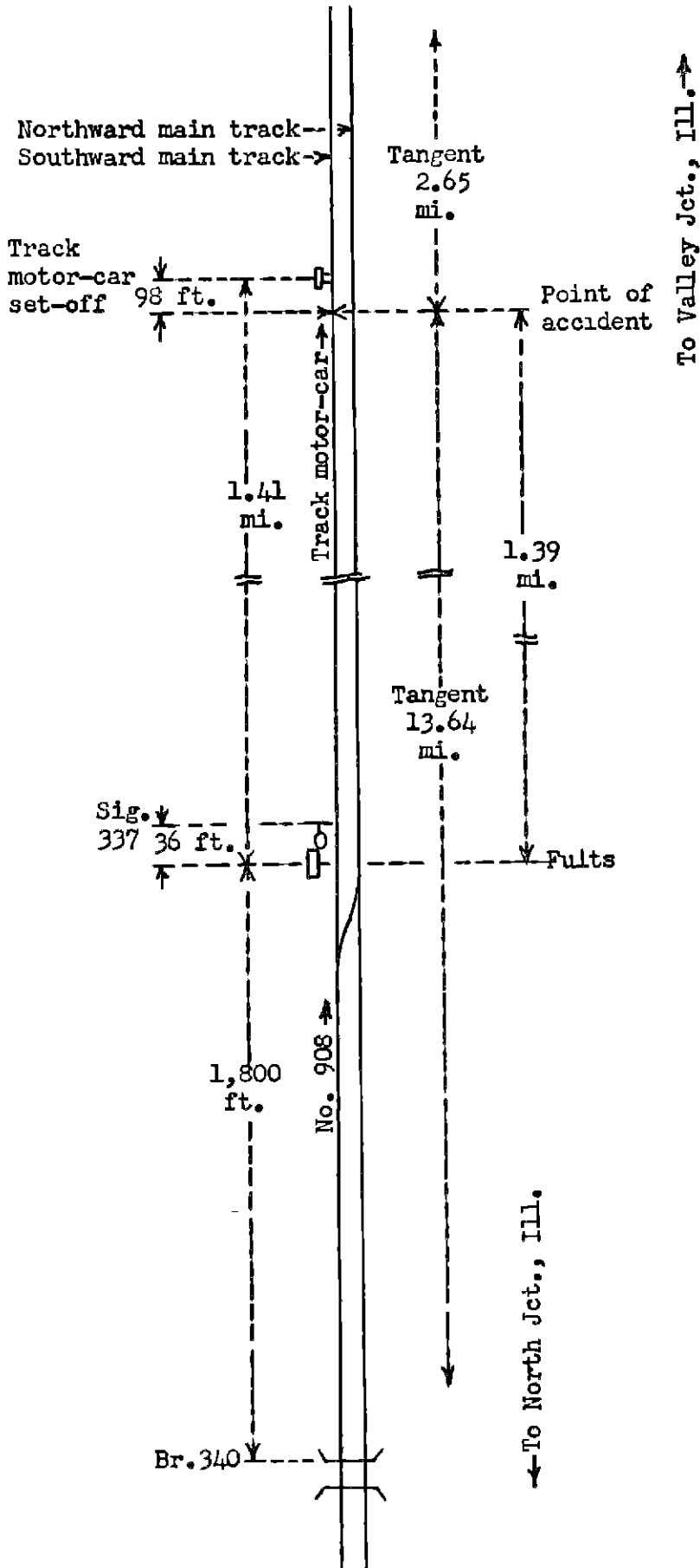
Accident near Fults, Ill., on February 28, 1956, caused
by failure to take required precautions in the
operation of a track motor-car.

CLARKE, Commissioner:

On February 28, 1956, there was a rear-end collision
between a track motor-car and a passenger train on the
Missouri Pacific Railroad near Fults, Ill., which resulted
in the death of one maintenance-of-way employee.

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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.



•	Valley Jct., Ill.	9.41 mi.
•	G.M. & O. Crossing	13.12 mi.
•	Valmeyer	5.41 mi.
•	Maeystown	4.29 mi.
X	Point of accident	1.39 mi.
•	Fults	8.11 mi.
•	Prairie DuRocher	5.98 mi.
•	FI Crossover	1.46 mi.
•	Flinton	12.39 mi.
•	Chester	57.77 mi.
•	North Jct., Ill.	

Report No. 3679
Missouri Pacific Railroad
Near Fults, Ill.
February 28, 1956

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Illinois Division extending between North Jct. and Valley Jct., Ill., 119.33 miles. Trains of the St. Louis Southwestern Railway, hereinafter referred to as the S.S.W., regularly are operated over this portion of the railroad. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a double-track line, over which trains moving with the current of traffic are operated by signal indications. Trains moving against the current of traffic are operated by train orders. Crossovers connect the two main tracks at FI Crossover, Fults, and Maeystown, located, respectively, 71.62 miles, 85.71 miles, and 91.39 miles north of North Jct. The accident occurred on the southward main track at a point 87.10 miles north of North Jct., and 1.39 miles north of the station sign at Fults. The main tracks are tangent throughout a distance of 13.64 miles immediately south of the point of accident and 2.65 miles northward. At the point of accident the grade is level.

A set-off for track motor-cars is located on the west side of the southward main track at a point 1.41 miles north of the station sign at Fults.

Automatic signal 337, governing south-bound movements on the southward main track, is located 36 feet north of the station sign at Fults. This signal is of the color-light type.

This carrier's rules for the operation of track motor-cars read in part as follows:

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 * * * Alertness and full use of eyes and ears are important.

* * *

(c-2) Positive Train Information.--In territory authorized by special instructions issued by Superintendent, complete and definite information will be issued by Train Dispatcher for use of Maintenance of Way Foremen in going to and returning from work.

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This positive information on trains will be designated by the symbol "PX" and will be numbered consecutively each day beginning at midnight. * * *

* * *

(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.

* * *

The PX system of issuing line-ups is in effect in the territory involved.

The maximum authorized speeds were 50 miles per hour for the passenger train and 20 miles per hour for the track motor-car.

Description of Accident

Track motor-car C-1279, occupied by a section foreman and four sectionmen, departed north-bound from Fults on the southward main track soon after 7:35 a. m. It proceeded to a point approximately 2,200 feet north of Fults and was stopped at that point while members of the section force performed maintenance work. About 10 minutes later, when this work was completed, the members of the section force again boarded the track motor-car and proceeded northward. While the car was moving at an estimated speed of 4 miles per hour the rear end was struck by No. 908 at a point 1.39 miles north of the station sign at Fults.

No. 908, a north-bound S.S.W. first-class passenger train, consisted of S.S.W. Diesel-electric unit 301, one passenger service box car, two baggage cars, one mail-express car, two coaches, and one sleeping car, in the order named. This train departed from North Jet. at 6:14 a. m., 1 hour 57 minutes late. At Chester, 57.77 miles north of North Jet., members of the crew received copies of train order No. 16 reading as follows:

NO 908 ENG SSW 301 HAS RIGHT OVER OPPOSING
TRAINS ON THE SOUTHWARD TRACK FI CROSSOVER
TO CROSSOVER AT MAEYSTOWN.

The train departed from this point at 7:23 a. m., 1 hour 46 minutes late, passed Flinton, 1.46 miles south of FI Crossover, at 7:37 a. m., was diverted to the southward

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main track, and passed Prairie Du Rocher, 9.50 miles south of the point of accident and the last open office, at 7:47 a. m., 1 hour 44 minutes late. While it was moving at a speed estimated as from 18 to 20 miles per hour it struck track motor-car C-1279.

The track motor-car, which was not derailed, was moved northward to the point at which the locomotive stopped, 321 feet north of the point of collision. It was considerably damaged. The front end of the locomotive of No. 908 was slightly damaged.

One sectionman was killed.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 7:57 a. m.

Track motor-car C-1279 is of the belt-drive type and is powered by a 1-cylinder 8 to 13 horsepower engine. It has four-wheel brakes and is equipped with a canvas wind-shield at the front end. It weighs 1010 pounds and has seating capacity for eight persons.

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the accident the average daily movement in the vicinity of the point of accident was 30.1 trains. During this period 12 trains were operated against the current of traffic.

Discussion

On the day of the accident the train dispatcher issued PX line-up No. 7 to the operator at Valmeyer, 96.80 miles north of North Jct., at 6:55 a. m. This line-up read as follows:

MAINTENANCE OF WAY FOREMAN BETWEEN GM&O CROSSING AND FI CROSSOVER, 7:30 A.M. UNTIL 8:30 A.M. FEBRUARY 28, 1956. EXTRA 536 NORTH LEAVE FI CROSSOVER 7:10 A.M. NO. 908 LEAVE FI CROSSOVER 7:25 A.M., USING SCUTTERBOARD TRACK FI CROSSOVER TO CROSSOVER AT MAEYSTOWN. WORK EXTRA 4366 WORKING ON BOTH TRACKS BETWEEN GM&O CROSSING AND FI CROSSOVER.

G.M. & O. Crossing is 32.50 miles north of FI Crossover. The foreman of the section force at Fults, who was a resident of Valmeyer, obtained a copy of this line-up from the operator soon after it was issued and then drove to Fults in his automobile.

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The section force at Fults reported for duty at 7:30 a. m. The foreman read the line-up aloud while two members of his force refueled the track motor-car. The members of the force then boarded the track motor-car and departed north-bound on the southward main track between 7:35 and 7:40 a. m. The section foreman said that at this time signal 337 was displaying a green aspect, which indicated to him that the southward main track was clear of trains throughout a distance of approximately 3 miles south of the signal. The foreman was operating the track motor-car from a position on the left side at the rear, two sectionmen were seated in front of him, and the other two members of his force were seated on the right side of the track motor-car. The sectionman on the right side at the rear regularly was assigned the duty of maintaining a lookout to the rear, and the other members of the force maintained a lookout ahead and inspected the track. The track motor-car was stopped for a period of 10 minutes or more at a point approximately 2,100 feet north of the section house while members of the force made repairs at a rail joint. The foreman said that no train was in sight when members of his force again boarded the track motor-car and proceeded northward. From this point the view of a train approaching Fults from the south is obscured by elevation of the tracks on a bridge approach which rises to the top of a levee at a point approximately 1,800 feet south of the station sign. The foreman said that he intended to have the track motor-car removed from the track at the set-off 1.41 miles north of Fults. The sectionman who was assigned to maintain a lookout to the rear said that he had not heard the foreman read the line-up before leaving Fults. He said that as the car moved northward his attention was diverted to an inspection of the adjacent main track and he did not see the approaching train. The foreman said that he thought a lookout to the rear was being maintained. He was unaware that No. 908 was closely approaching until he turned toward the rear and saw the locomotive approximately 400 or 500 feet distant. At the same time he heard the pneumatic horn sounded. He immediately called a warning, and all except one member of the section force jumped off the track motor-car. The foreman estimated that the track motor-car was moving at a speed of 6 to 8 miles per hour when he first saw the approaching train and that it was reduced to about 4 miles per hour before the collision occurred. The sectionman who remained on the track motor-car was killed.

When the accident occurred No. 908 was being operated over the southward main track in order to pass a north-bound freight train which was operating over the northward main track. As No. 908 was approaching the point where the

accident occurred the speed was about 50 miles per hour, as estimated by the engineer. The enginemen were in the control compartment at the front of the locomotive. The train porter was in the fifth car, and the conductor and the flagman were in the rear car. The headlight was lighted brightly. The brakes of this train had been tested and had functioned properly when used en route. The grade-crossing whistle signal was sounded on the pneumatic horn of the locomotive as the train approached each of several rail-highway grade crossings in the vicinity of Fults. The engineer said that he and the fireman saw what appeared to be men working on the track at a distance of approximately 1-1/4 miles. He said that when he became aware that a track motor-car was occupying the southward main track he immediately made an emergency application of the brakes and sounded the pneumatic horn. He estimated that the locomotive was 600 or 700 feet from the track motor-car when the brakes were applied in emergency, and he thought the speed was reduced to 18 or 20 miles per hour before the collision occurred.

The rules of this carrier governing the operation of track motor-cars provide that foremen and others must move at all times with care and caution, expecting trains at any time without notice and protecting when necessary, using the prescribed signals. Care must be exercised to avoid collision with trains. PX line-ups containing complete and definite information are issued by the train dispatcher for the use of maintenance-of-way foremen in this territory in going to and returning from work. When gang cars are running on main track, at least one man must face the rear and keep lookout for following trains. In the instant case the section foreman obtained a PX line-up before the track motor-car departed from Fults. However, the employee who was assigned the duty of maintaining a lookout to the rear diverted his attention elsewhere. No other protection was provided against following trains. No. 908 passed FI Cross-over more than 12 minutes after the time shown for it at that point on the PX line-up and struck the track motor-car at a point 98 feet south of the track motor-car set-off toward which it was moving.

During the past 10 years the Commission has investigated 64 collisions, including the present case, in which track motor-cars were involved. These accidents resulted in the death of 94 persons and the injury of 182 persons.

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Cause

This accident was caused by failure to take required precautions in the operation of a track motor-car.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this thirtieth day of March, 1956.

By the Commission, Commissioner Clarke.

(SEAL)

HAROLD D. McCOY,
Secretary.