

NOTICE
INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
IN RE
ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORT NO 3660

Notice is hereby given that Report No. 3660, dated December 1, 1955, relative to an accident occurring on the New York, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad at Willoughby, Ohio, indicated as occurring on October 14, 1955, is hereby corrected by substituting October 7, 1955, for October 14, 1955, as the date of the accident and that the report in all other respects remain unchanged.

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

By the Commission, Commissioner Clarke.

(SEAL)

HAROLD D. McCOY,
Secretary.

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

REPORT NO. 3660
THE NEW YORK, CHICAGO AND ST. LOUIS
RAILROAD COMPANY
IN RE ACCIDENT
AT WILLOUGHBY, OHIO, ON
OCTOBER 14, 1955

SUMMARY

Date: October 14, 1955

Railroad: New York, Chicago and St. Louis

Location: Willoughby, Ohio

Kind of accident: Rear-end collision

Equipment involved: Track motor-car : Locomotive with
caboose

Train number: : Extra 735 West

Locomotive number: : 735

Consist: : Caboose

Estimated speeds: 4-5 m. p. h. : 50 m. p. h.

Operation: Signal indications

Track: Single; tangent; 0.25 percent
descending grade westward

Weather: Raining

Time: 4:05 p. m.

Casualties: 1 killed

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

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT NO. 3660

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

THE NEW YORK, CHICAGO AND ST. LOUIS
RAILROAD COMPANY

December 1, 1955

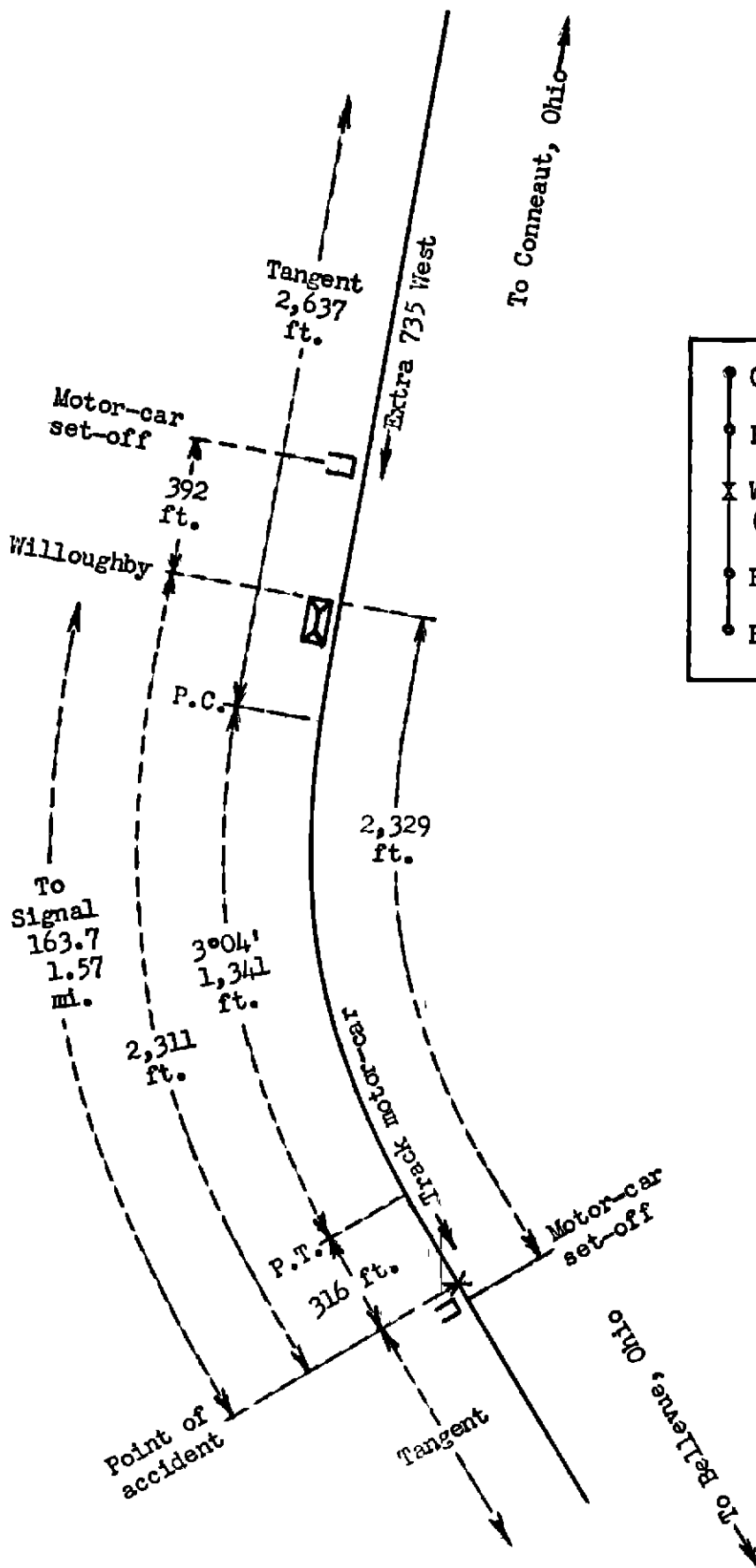
Accident at Willoughby, Ohio, on October 14, 1955, caused
by failure to provide adequate protection for the
movement of a track motor-car.

¹
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

CLARKE, Commissioner:

On October 14, 1955, there was a rear-end collision between a track motor-car and a locomotive with caboose on the New York, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad at Willoughby, Ohio, which resulted in the death of one signal helper. This accident was investigated in conjunction with a representative of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio.

¹
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.



•	Conneaut, Ohio
•	39.3 mi.
•	PE Tower
•	9.8 mi.
X	Willoughby
	(Point of accident)
•	8.4 mi.
•	Euclid
•	74.7 mi.
•	Bellevue, Ohio

Report No. 3660
 New York, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad
 Willoughby, Ohio
 October 14, 1955

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Cleveland Division extending between Conneaut and Bellevue, Ohio, 132.2 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line, over which trains are operated by signal indications. The accident occurred on the main track at a point 49.1 miles west of Conneaut and 2,311 feet west of the freight station at Willoughby. From the east there are, in succession, a tangent 2,637 feet in length, a 3°04' curve to the left 1,341 feet, and a tangent 316 feet to the point of accident and a considerable distance westward. The grade is 0.25 percent descending westward at the point of accident.

Semi-automatic signal 163.7, governing west-bound movements, is located 1.57 miles east of the point of accident. This signal forms part of a traffic-control system. The control machine is operated by the dispatcher at Conneaut.

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

5. When employee operating car has means of communication with operator or dispatcher, the main track must not be occupied until a line-up in writing on a prescribed form has been obtained.

Line-ups shall be read to all riders and plan of operation known to all.

* * *

17. The employees in charge of car must see that all occupants are properly placed, designating certain places for certain occupants, with instructions that a constant look-out be kept in each direction. * * *

Timetable special instructions for the operation of track motor-cars read in part as follows:

801. Line-ups of trains will be issued by authority and over the signature of the Chief Train Dispatcher, and shall contain designation of trains, engine number, place and time last reported on train dispatcher's territory, including trains called but which have not departed from terminal yards or originating point, at time line-up is issued.

* * *

802. Line-ups will be issued to operators at all open telegraph offices at stated times, which shall be designated by special notice for each operating territory, and shall contain the same information to all employees or operators receiving same.

The maximum authorized speeds are 60 miles per hour for freight trains, 50 miles per hour for locomotives with caboose only, and 20 miles per hour for track motor-cars.

Description of Accident

About 4 p. m. track motor-car 1490, occupied by a signal maintainer and a signal helper, departed west-bound from a point 392 feet east of the freight station at Willoughby. Several minutes later, while the speed was being reduced preparatory to stopping at a motor-car set-off, the car was struck by Extra 735 West. The accident occurred 2,311 feet west of the freight station.

Extra 735 West, a west-bound train, consisted of steam locomotive 735 and a caboose. This train passed PE Tower, 9.8 miles east of Willoughby, at 3:47 p. m., passed signal 163.7, which indicated Proceed, and while moving at a speed of somewhat less than 50 miles per hour it struck track motor-car 1490.

The track motor-car was demolished. Extra 735 West stopped with the front of the locomotive 1,556 feet west of the point of accident.

The signal helper, who was operating the track motor-car, was killed.

It was raining at the time of the accident, which occurred about 4:05 p. m.

Track motor-car 1490 was powered by a one-cylinder five to eight horsepower engine and was equipped with four-wheel brakes. It was equipped with a top and had seating capacity for four persons. It was insulated to prevent the shunting of 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 26.2 trains.

Discussion

On the day of the accident the signal maintainer and the helper reported for duty at Euclid, 8.4 miles west of Willoughby, and performed service at various points between Euclid and Willoughby and also at Willoughby. About 3:30 p. m. the maintainer entered the freight station at Willoughby to obtain a line-up of train movements. The agent was engaged in other duties, and the maintainer copied a line-up which was being issued by the train dispatcher at 3:43 p. m. This line-up included the information that Extra 735 West, without cars, was passing PE Tower. After leaving the station the maintainer showed the line-up to the helper. These employees intended to inspect a switch near a motor-car set-off 2,329 feet west of the freight station, and the maintainer said that after reading the line-up the helper said he thought there would be sufficient time to proceed to that point on the track motor-car ahead of Extra 735 West. They then placed the track motor-car on the track and departed west-bound. The maintainer said that he looked eastward at frequent intervals, but he did not see or hear Extra 735 West until the speed of the track motor-car was being reduced as it approached the set-off. He then

saw that the train was closely approaching. He called a warning and jumped from the car immediately before the collision occurred. The maintainer said that because he was not entirely familiar with the physical characteristics of the railroad in the vicinity of the point of accident he had been depending upon the helper to operate the track motor-car. The maintainer had been temporarily assigned in this territory approximately 3 weeks prior to the day of the accident, and during a portion of this time he and the helper had used a highway vehicle instead of the track motor-car in moving from one portion of the territory to another.

As Extra 735 West was approaching the point where the accident occurred the enginemen were maintaining a lookout ahead from their respective positions in the cab of the locomotive. The members of the train crew were in the caboose. The headlight was dimmed, and the oscillating headlight was lighted brightly. Because of curvature of the track the fireman could not see the track motor-car until the locomotive reached a point which the fireman thought was 750 to 1,000 feet east of the car. When he saw the car he called a warning, and the engineer immediately made an emergency application of the brakes. From the engineer's position in the cab, he was unable to see the car until after the brakes had been applied. The enginemen said that the grade-crossing whistle signal had been sounded for a grade crossing a short distance east of the freight station and for a second crossing a short distance west of the station, and that it was being sounded for a third crossing a short distance west of the point of accident when the fireman saw the car. According to the tape of the speed-recording device, the speed of the train was 50 miles per hour when the brake application became effective.

The rules of this carrier provide that when the operator of a track motor-car has means of communication with an operator or dispatcher he must not occupy the main track without a written line-up of train movements. On the line on which this accident occurred line-ups are issued at approximately 7:15 a. m., 10:01 a. m., 12:45 p. m., and 3:30 p. m. each day, and at such other times as they may be requested by

the operators of track motor-cars. These line-ups indicate the time and the place at which each train was last reported on the train dispatcher's territory. The maximum authorized speed for freight trains is 60 miles per hour, and the operators of track motor-cars are instructed to use this speed as a basis for calculating the approximate arrival times of trains.

During the past 10 years the Commission has investigated 63 collisions, including the present case, in which track motor-cars were involved. These accidents resulted in the death of 95 persons and the injury of 180 persons.

Cause

This accident was caused by failure to provide adequate protection for the movement of a track motor-car.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this first
day of December, 1955

By the Commission, Commissioner Clarke.

(SEAL)

HAROLD D. McCOY,
Secretary.