

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 3174

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY

REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT

NEAR KIMBALL, NEBR., ON

MARCH 25, 1948

SUMMARY

Railroad: Union Pacific

Date: March 25, 1942

Location: Kimball, Nebr.

Kind of accident: Rear-end collision

Equipment involved: Track motor-car : Passenger train

Train number: : 22

Engine number: : 817

Consists: Motor-car S41-301 : 15 cars

Estimated speeds: Unknown : 75 m. p. h.

Operation: Signal indications

Track: Double; tangent; 0.53 percent
descending grade eastward

Weather: Clear

Time: 9:33 a. m.

Casualties: 1 killed

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

Recommendation: That the Union Pacific Railroad Company
provide adequate block-signal or
train-order protection for the move-
ment of track motor-cars on its li

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 3174

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

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY

May 27, 1948

Accident near Kimball, Nebr., on March 25, 1948, caused
by failure to provide adequate protection for the
movement of a track motor-car.

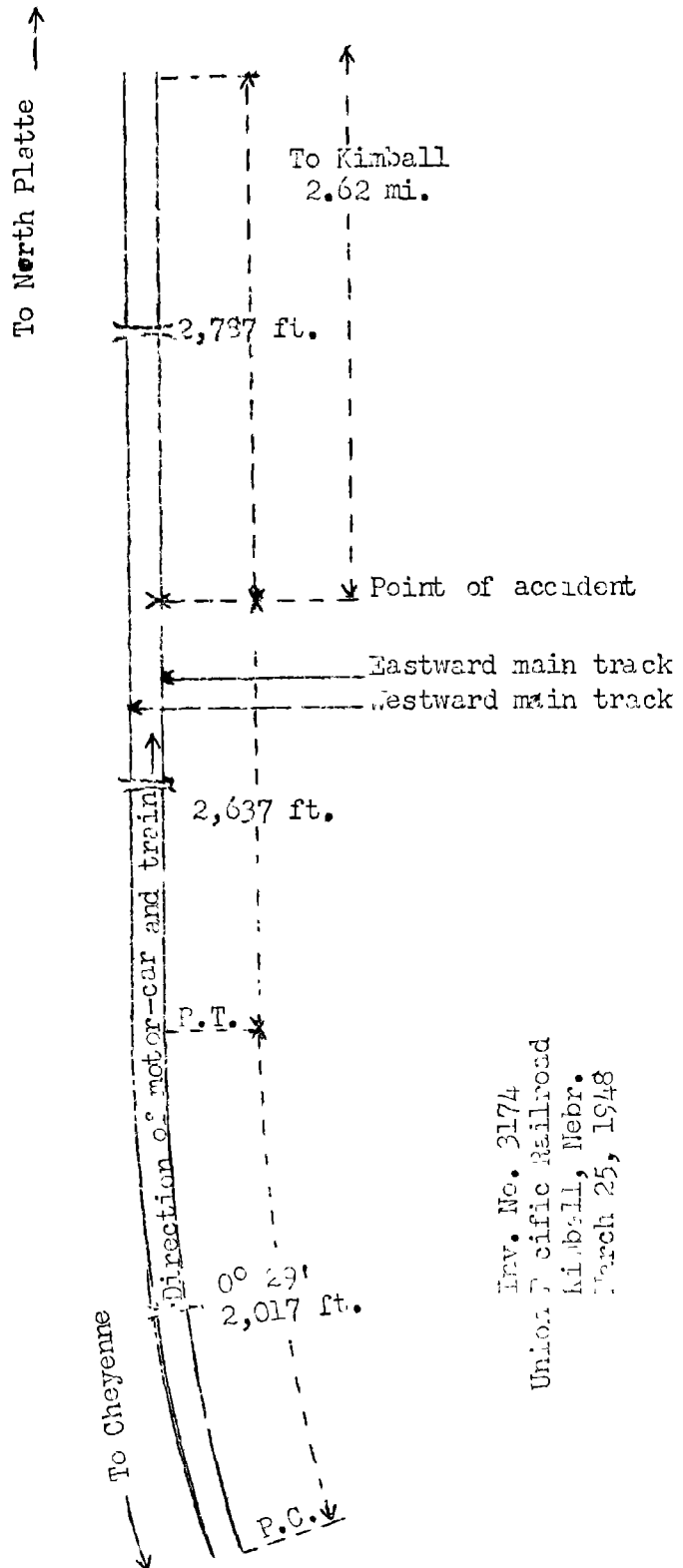
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On March 25, 1948, there was a rear-end collision
between a track motor-car and a passenger train on the
Union Pacific Railroad near Kimball, Nebr., which resulted
in the death of one 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.

○	North Platte, Nebr.	142.30 mi.
○	Potter	13.10 mi.
○	Kimball	2.62 mi.
X	Point of accident	9.48 mi.
○	Bushnell, Nebr.	10.10 mi.
○	Pine Bluffs, Wyo.	42.80 mi.
○	Cheyenne, Wyo.	



Inv. No. 3174
 Union Pacific Railroad
 Kimball, Nebr.
 March 25, 1948

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Nebraska Division extending between Cheyenne, Wyo., and North Platte, Nebr., 236.4 miles, a double-track line, over which trains moving with the current of traffic are operated by signal indications. The accident occurred on the eastward main track 62.33 miles east of Cheyenne and 2.62 miles west of the station at Kimball. From the west on the eastward main track there are, in succession, a $0^{\circ}29'$ curve to the right 2,017 feet in length and a tangent 2,637 feet to the point of accident and 2,787 feet eastward. The grade is 0.33 percent descending eastward.

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

99 (1). * * *

Copy of current time-table, and the following supply of signal equipment must be on each one-man car * * *

* * *

Double Track

DAYS

* * *

5 red flags,
3 fuses,
Not less than
36 torpedoes.

1500. Track cars must be * * * in charge of employees who have been examined and qualified as track car operators.

* * *

1501. Before occupying main track with track cars, employees in charge of them must, if possible, obtain information from operator or train dispatcher in writing as to train movements. Such information, however, does not relieve employees from observing the rules for protection of track cars.

* * *

1504. Track cars must be run with caution at all times and must never be used when to do so would involve risk of accident.

The speed shown below must not be exceeded * * *

Power-propelled one-man cars.....30 M.P.H.
* * *

1516. * * *

Only insulated track cars may be used where there are track circuits.

The maximum authorized speed for the train involved was 80 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

Track motor-car S41-301 departed east-bound from Pine Bluffs, Mo., 19.53 miles west of the point of accident, about 8:55 a. m., passed Bushnell, the last open office, 9.48 miles west of the point of accident, about 9:15 a. m., and while moving on the eastward main track at an unknown speed it was struck by No. 22 at a point 2.62 miles west of the station at Kimball.

No. 22, an east-bound first-class passenger train, consisted of engine 817, three express cars, two baggage cars, one express car, one baggage car, two coaches, one dining car, one lounge car and four sleeping cars, in the order named. This train passed Pine Bluffs at 9:16 a. m., 31 minutes late, passed Bushnell at 9:25 a. m., 29 minutes late, and while moving on the eastward main track at an estimated speed of 75 miles per hour it struck motor-car S41-301.

Motor-car S41-301 was demolished.

The employee killed was a track patrolman, who was the sole occupant of the motor-car.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 9:33 a. m.

According to data furnished by the railroad, motor-car S41-301 was of the 4-wheel type. It weighed 651 pounds, and was powered by a gasoline motor.

Discussion

The investigation disclosed that about 7:30 a. m., about 2 hours 3 minutes prior to the time the accident occurred, the train dispatcher issued by telephone to the operator at Pine Bluffs a line-up of train movements, which included the information that No. 22, an east-bound first-class passenger train, would pass Pine Bluffs on time. In accordance with long-standing practice, the operator at Pine Bluffs put copies of the line-up in a place in the office where employees concerned could obtain the information. The operator said that about 8 a. m. the track patrolman entered the office and obtained the information contained in the line-up. Previously, the track patrolman had been instructed to proceed by track motor-car to Potter, 40.3 miles east of Pine Bluffs, to report to the operator of a rail-detector car.

As No. 22 was approaching the point where the accident occurred the speed was about 80 miles per hour. No train order restricting the movement of No. 22 with respect to the track motor-car involved had been issued, and the crew of this train was not informed that the motor-car was in this territory. The engineers were maintaining a lookout ahead, and the first these employees knew of the presence of the motor-car was when they saw the motor-car about 1,300 feet distant. Then the engineer sounded alarm signals on the engine whistle and, a few seconds later, he moved the brake valve to emergency position. The brakes of this train had been tested and had functioned properly en route.

Track motor-cars move in this territory on written line-ups. Train crews are not given information about line-ups issued to motor-car operators. The rules governing the operation of track motor-cars provide that motor-car operators must maintain a lookout for moving trains. Motor-cars are insulated to prevent actuation of automatic block signals. The operator of the motor-car was last examined on the rules on August 26, 1947. At the time of the accident, the motor-car was equipped with the required flagging signals. A copy of the current timetable was found in the vicinity of the point where the accident occurred.

During the past five years the Commission has investigated sixteen other collisions between trains and track motor-cars. These accidents resulted in the death of 54 persons and the injury of 57 persons, and were caused by failure to provide adequate protection for the movement of track motor-cars. If block or train-order protection had been provided for the movement of the motor-car in the instant case, the members of the crew of the following train would have received definite information that the motor-car was occupying the block.

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 Union Pacific Railroad Company provide adequate block-signal or train-order protection for the movement of track motor-cars on its line.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-seventh day of May, 1948.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,

Secretary.