

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

REPORT NO. 3581
CHICAGO AND NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY
IN RE ACCIDENT
NEAR ROSCOE, ILL., ON
JULY 4, 1954

SUMMARY

Date: July 4, 1954

Railroad: Chicago and North Western

Location: Roscoe, Ill

Kind of accident: Rear-end collision

Trains involved: Freight : Passenger

Train numbers: 591 . 507

Engine numbers: Diesel-electric . 2907
units 1646, 1624,
and 1573

Consists: 60 cars, caboose 4 cars

Speeds: Standing . 10 m. p. h

Operation: Timetable and train orders

Track: Single, tangent; 0.19 percent
ascending grade westward

Weather: Cloudy, misting

Time: 2:22 a. m.

Casualties: 2 injured

Cause: Failure to provide adequate protection
for train occupying main track on
time of following superior train

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT NO. 3581

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

CHICAGO AND NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY

August 19, 1954

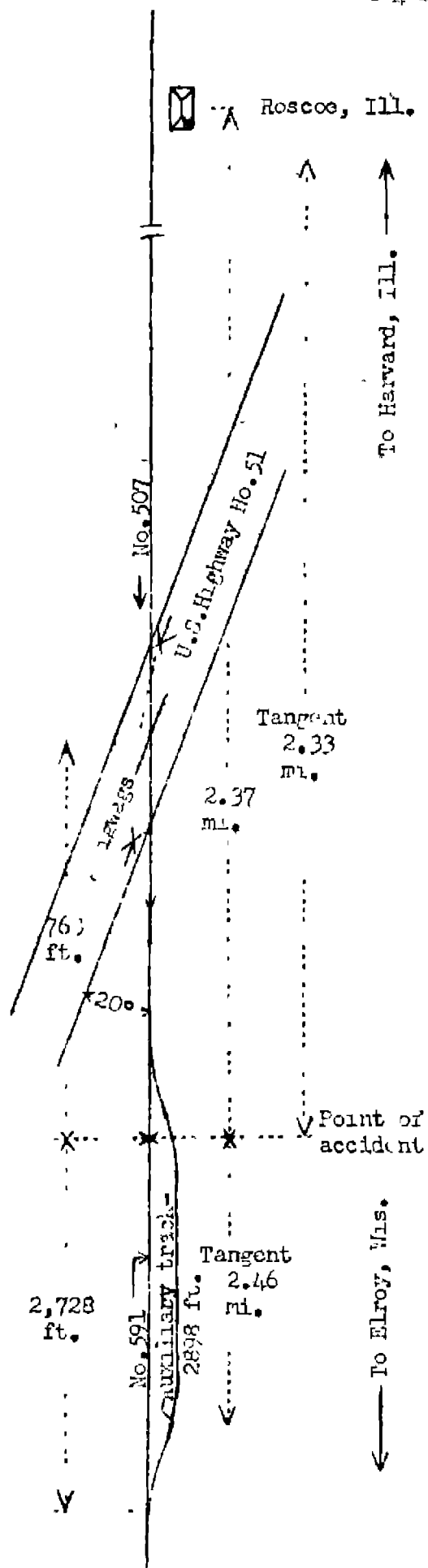
Accident near Roscoe, Ill., on July 4, 1954, caused by
failure to provide adequate protection for a train
occupying the main track on the time of a following
superior train.

1
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

CLARKE, Commissioner:

On July 4, 1954, there was a rear-end collision
between a freight train and a passenger train on the
Chicago and North Western Railway near Roscoe, Ill.,
which resulted in the injury of one passenger and one
train-service 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 Clarke for consideration and
disposition.



Harvard, Ill.
 22.90 mi.
 Roscoe, Ill.
 2.37 mi.
 X Point of accident
 129.53 mi.
 Elroy, Wis.

Report No. 3581
 Chicago and Northwestern Railway
 Roscoe, Ill.
 July 4, 1954

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Madison Division extending between Harvard, Ill., and Elroy, Wis., 154.8 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line, over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders. Between the hours of 9 p. m. and 8 a. m. there is no block system in use. Between points 25.24 miles and 25.79 miles west of Harvard an auxiliary track parallels the main track on the south. The accident occurred on the main track at a point 2.37 miles west of the station at Roscoe, Ill., and 2,728 feet east of the west auxiliary-track switch. The main track is tangent throughout a distance of 2.33 miles immediately east of the point of accident and 2.46 miles westward. The grade for west-bound trains varies between 0.53 percent and 0.19 percent ascending throughout a distance of over 1 mile immediately east of the point of accident, and is 0.19 percent ascending at that point.

U. S. Highway No. 51 intersects the railroad at an angle of 20 degrees at a point 763 feet east of the point of accident. Automatic warning signals of the wig-wag type are located in the northwest and southeast angles of the intersection. These signals are activated when a west-bound train occupies any portion of the main track throughout a distance of 2,600 feet immediately east of the crossing.

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

D-72. Trains of the first class are superior to those of the second, * * *

86. Unless otherwise provided, an inferior train must clear the time of a superior train, in the same direction, not less than five minutes, but must be clear at the time a first-class train, in the same direction, is due to leave the next station in the rear where time is shown.

91. Unless some form of block signals is used, the time space to be maintained between trains in the same direction will be indicated by special rule on each division time-table. * * *

99. When a train stops under circumstances in which it may be overtaken by another train, the flagman must go back immediately with flagman's signals a sufficient distance to insure full protection, placing torpedoes and when necessary, in addition, displaying lighted fuses. * * *

* * *

99a. When a flagman goes back to protect a train at night, or in obscure weather, he will place a lighted fusee in the center of the track five hundred feet back of the rear of the train, and then continue to go back until proper distance is reached to insure full protection.

* * *

Timetable special instructions read in part as follows:

Trains will be spaced ten minutes apart * * *

General Orders read in part as follows

The following signals will be used by flagmen.

* * *

Night signals - A white light
torpedoes and
fuses

The maximum authorized speeds are 59 miles per hour for passenger trains and 45 miles per hour for freight trains.

Description of Accident

No. 591, a west-bound second-class freight train, consisted of Diesel-electric units 1646, 1624, and 1673, coupled in multiple-unit control, 60 cars, and a caboose. This train departed from Harvard, the last open office, at 1 25 a. m., 1 hour 40 minutes late, and stopped on the main track at 2 a. m. with the rear end 2.37 miles west of the station at Roscoe and 2,728 feet east of the west auxiliary-track switch. At 2:22 a. m., while cars were being added to the front end of the train, the rear end was struck by No. 507.

No. 507, a west-bound first-class passenger train, consisted of engine 2907, a 4-6-2 type, one express car, two baggage cars, and one coach, in the order named. This train departed from Harvard at 1:48 a. m., 8 minutes late, and while moving at an estimated speed of 10 miles per hour it struck the rear end of No. 591.

No. 507 stopped with the front end of the engine 49 feet west of the point of collision. The engine-truck wheels, the driving wheels of the engine, and the left front wheel of the front truck of the tender were derailed. The engine stopped in line with the track. It was somewhat damaged. The caboose, the rear car, and the rear truck of the second car from the rear of No. 591 were derailed. The caboose was demolished, and the rear two cars were considerably damaged.

The train baggageman of No. 507 was injured.

The weather was cloudy and there was a light mist at the time of the accident, which occurred at 2:22 a. m.

Discussion

When No. 591 arrived at the auxiliary track west of Roscoe the enginemen and the front brakeman were on the locomotive. The conductor and the flagman were in the caboose. After the train stopped, the front brakeman detached the locomotive and the first three cars and coupled them to 12 cars on the auxiliary track which were to go forward in the train. The collision occurred at approximately the time that these cars were being coupled to the forward portion of the train. The flagman said that when the train stopped he immediately proceeded eastward to provide protection. He said he placed a lighted fusee on the track a short distance west of U. S. Highway No. 51, continued eastward to a point about 1,200 feet east of the caboose, and remained at the latter point until he observed the headlight of No. 507 in the vicinity of Roscoe. He did not place torpedoes on the track. He said that he gave stop signals with a lighted fusee as No. 507 approached but the signals were not acknowledged by the engineer. As the engine passed him he observed that the engineer was seated in his normal position in the cab. The conductor said that immediately after the train stopped he observed the flagman proceed eastward, place a lighted fusee on the track at a point about 500 feet east of the caboose, and then proceed eastward to a point beyond U. S. Highway No. 51. He said that as No. 507 approached

he observed the flagman giving stop signals with a lighted fusee from the latter point. The engine of No. 507 is equipped with a red oscillating signal light which automatically becomes illuminated if brake-pipe pressure drops below 40 pounds. The conductor of No. 591 said that this light did not become illuminated before the collision occurred.

As No. 507 was approaching the point where the accident occurred the speed was about 45 miles per hour. The enginemen were in their respective 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 headlight was lighted brightly. The brakes of the train had been tested and had functioned properly when used en route. The engineer said that when the train reached a point approximately 1/2 mile east of U. S. Highway No. 51 he saw the red lights on the wig-wag warning signals at the crossing become illuminated. He could see that highway traffic over the crossing was unusually heavy, and when the train reached a point about 850 feet east of the crossing he made a service brake-pipe reduction of 10 or 12 pounds. He said that as the engine was closely approaching the crossing he observed a person beyond the crossing giving stop signals with a lighted fusee. At approximately the same time, the fireman called a warning, and the engineer immediately made an emergency application of the brakes. The engineer said that as the engine crossed the highway he observed the marker lights on the caboose ahead and that he thought the flagman was approximately 100 feet east of the caboose. He estimated that the speed of the train was approximately 35 miles per hour when he made the emergency application of the brakes and 10 miles per hour when the collision occurred. The fireman said that the engine was in the immediate vicinity of the crossing when he first observed the flagman giving stop signals from a point west of the crossing. Members of the train crew said they noticed that a brake application was made as the train was approaching the crossing.

No. 507 is due to leave Roscoe at 2:18 a. m. The rules of this carrier provide that an inferior train must be clear of the main track at the time a first-class train in the same direction is due to leave the next station in the rear where time is shown. They also provide that when a train stops under circumstances in which it may be overtaken by another train, the flagman must go back immediately with flagman's signals a sufficient distance to insure full protection. In

the instant case, the statements of the employees as to the location of the flagman when No. 507 passed him are contradictory. However, the fact that the engineer of No. 507 made a brake application as the train approached U. S. Highway No. 51 indicates that he was alert and aware of his location, and the fact that he was unable to stop short of the rear end of No. 591 indicates that the flagman was not back a sufficient distance to insure full protection.

In this territory trains are operated by timetable and train orders. Between the hours of 9 p. m. and 8 a. m. the only provision for spacing following trains is by the time-interval method enforced by operators at open stations. The rules require that a following train must be spaced at least 10 minutes behind a preceding train. In this case the preceding train departed from Harvard 23 minutes before the following train departed from that station.

Cause

This accident was caused by failure to provide adequate protection for a train occupying the main track on the time of a following superior train

Dated at Washington, D. C., this nineteenth day of August, 1954.

By the Commission, Commissioner Clarke.

(SEAL)

GEORGE W. LAIRD,
Secretary.