

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2694
THE ELGIN, JOLIET AND EASTERN RAILWAY COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
NEAR EAST JOLIET, ILL., ON
APRIL 19, 1943

SUMMARY

Railroad: Elgin, Joliet and Eastern
Date: April 19, 1943
Location: East Joliet, Ill.
Kind of accident: Rear-end collision
Trains involved: Freight : Freight
Train numbers: Extra 706 West : Extra 718 West
Engine numbers: 706 : 718
Consist: 36 cars, caboose : 31 cars, caboose
Speed: Standing : 6-18 m. p. h.
Operation: Timetable, train orders and
automatic block-signal system
Track: Double; 1°29'50" curve to right;
0.57 percent descending grade
westward
Weather: Cloudy
Time: About 8:45 a. m.
Casualties: 1 killed; 2 injured
Cause: Accident caused by failure to
provide adequate flag protec-
tion for preceding train, and
by failure to operate following
train in accordance with signal
indications

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2694

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

THE ELGIN, JOLIET AND EASTERN RAILWAY COMPANY

June 7, 1943.

Accident near East Joliet, Ill., on April 19, 1943, caused
by failure to provide adequate flag protection for
preceding train, and by failure to operate following
train in accordance with signal indications.

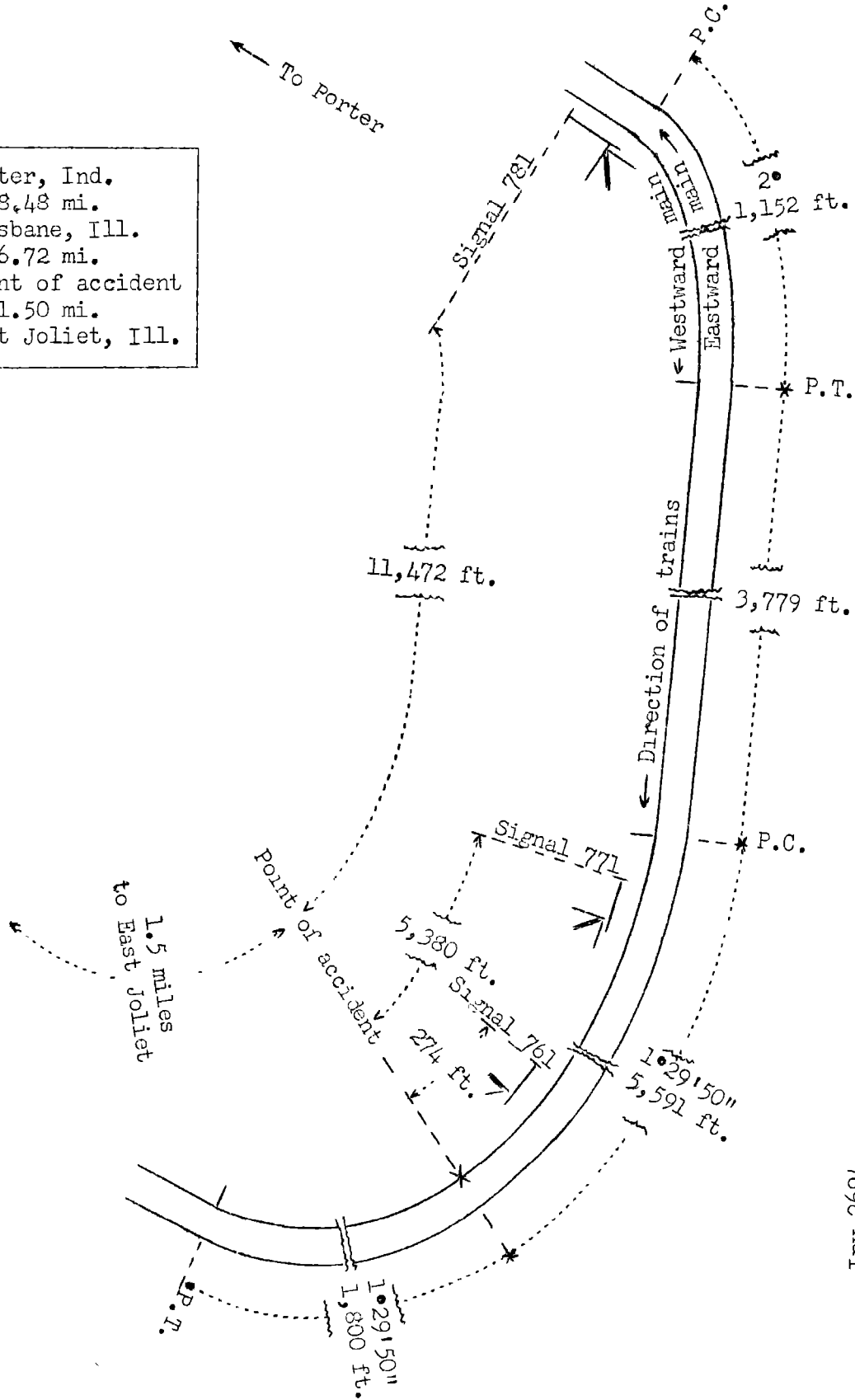
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On April 19, 1943, there was a rear-end collision between two freight trains on the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway near East Joliet, Ill., which resulted in the death of one employee and the injury of two employees. This accident was investigated in conjunction with a representative of the Illinois Commerce Commission.

¹Under authority of section 17 (2) of the Interstate Commerce Act the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the Commission to Commissioner Patterson for consideration and disposition.

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| o | Porter, Ind. |
| | 48.48 mi. |
| o | Brisbane, Ill. |
| | 6.72 mi. |
| X | Point of accident |
| | 1.50 mi. |
| o | East Joliet, Ill. |



Inv-2694
 Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway
 East Joliet, Ill.
 April 19, 1943

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Joliet Division extending between Porter, Ind., and East Joliet, Ill., 56.7 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a double-track line. Trains moving with the current of traffic on the westward main track are operated by timetable, train orders and an automatic block-signal system. The accident occurred on the westward main track 1.5 miles east of East Joliet. Approaching from the east there are, in succession, a 2° curve to the right 1,152 feet in length, a tangent 3,779 feet, and a 1°29'50" curve to the right 5,591 feet to the point of accident and 1,800 feet beyond. The grade for west-bound trains is 0.57 percent descending throughout a distance of 3,095 feet east of the point of accident.

Automatic signals 781, 771 and 761, which govern west-bound movements on the westward main track, are located, respectively, 11,472, 5,380 and 274 feet east of the point of accident. These signals are of the color-light type, and are approach lighted. The involved aspects and corresponding indications and names of these signals are as follows:

Signals 781 and 771

<u>Aspect</u>	<u>Indication</u>	<u>Name</u>
Yellow	Proceed prepared to stop at next signal. Train exceeding medium speed must at once reduce to that speed.	Approach.

Signal 761

Red over number plate.	Stop; then proceed at restricted speed.	Stop and proceed.
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Operating rules read in part as follows:

DEFINITIONS.

* * *

Medium Speed.--A speed not exceeding twenty five miles per hour.

* * *

Restricted Speed.--A speed not exceeding that which will enable a train or engine to stop short of a train ahead, obstruction, or switch not properly lined, and to look out for broken rail.

14. Engine Whistle Signals.

NOTE.--The signals prescribed are illustrated by "o" for short sounds; "___" for longer sounds. * * *

* * *

(c) ___ o o o Flagman protect rear of train.

* * *

(e) ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Flagman may return from east.

* * *

34. All members of engine and train crews must, when practicable, communicate to each other by its name the indication of each signal affecting the movement of their train or engine.

All such employes must know from observation the indication displayed before calling or answering.

35. The following signals will be used by flagmen:

Day Signals--A red flag,
Torpedoes and
Fusees.

* * *

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 two torpedoes, and when necessary, in addition, displaying lighted fusees.

When recalled and safety to train will permit, he may return.

When the conditions require, he will leave the torpedoes and a lighted fusee.

* * *

The maximum authorized speed for freight trains is 45 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

Extra 706 West, a west-bound freight train, consisting of engine 706, 33 loaded and 3 empty cars and a caboose, departed from Brisbane, 8.22 miles east of East Joliet and the last open office, at 8:19 a. m., according to the dispatcher's record of movement of trains, stopped at signal 761, which displayed stop-and-proceed, then proceeded and stopped at 8:35 a. m., with the caboose standing 274 feet west of signal 761. About 10 minutes later the rear end was struck by Extra 718 West.

Extra 718 West, a west-bound freight train, consisting of engine 718, 29 loaded and 2 empty cars and a caboose, passed Brisbane at 8:37 a. m., according to the dispatcher's record of movement of trains, passed signals 781 and 771, which displayed approach, passed signal 761, which displayed stop-and-proceed, and while moving at a speed variously estimated as 6 to 18 miles per hour it collided with the rear end of Extra 706 West.

The caboose of Extra 706 was demolished. The rear truck of the rear car was derailed and this car was slightly damaged. Engine 718 was derailed to the right and stopped, badly damaged, practically upright and at right angles to the westward main track. The tender was separated from the engine and stopped on its left side on the eastward main track.

It was cloudy at the time of the accident, which occurred about 8:45 a. m.

The employee killed was the engineer of Extra 718 West. The employees injured were the fireman and the front brakeman of Extra 718 West.

Discussion

The rules governing operation on this line 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. When recalled, he may return if it is safe to do so. He must place torpedoes and leave a lighted fusee if conditions require. Under the rules governing operation in automatic block-signal territory, an approach indication requires that the speed of a train must be reduced immediately to a speed not exceeding 25 miles per hour, and the train must be prepared to stop at the next signal. A stop-and-proceed indication requires a train to stop at the signal, then it may proceed prepared to stop short of a train or an obstruction.

Extra 706 West stopped about 8:35 a. m. with the caboose standing 274 feet west of signal 761. About 10 minutes later

the rear end was struck by Extra 718 West.

When Extra 706 stopped west of signal 761, the conductor and the flagman were in the caboose. Soon afterward the flagman went back to provide flag protection. He said he reached a point about 890 feet east of the caboose and remained there until he heard two short blasts of an engine whistle. He thought this signal indicated that his train was preparing to move westward. Since the engine-whistle signal for rear-end protection was not sounded, he assumed that the signal for the flagman to return to the train would not be sounded. As no train was seen approaching from the east he did not place torpedoes on the rail or leave a lighted fusee. He returned to the caboose and soon afterward Extra 718 was seen approaching at a distance of 1,600 feet. The conductor and the flagman immediately ran a distance of about 600 feet toward the approaching train and the conductor gave stop signals with a red flag, but Extra 718 passed them and collided with their train. If adequate flag protection had been provided for Extra 706 this accident would have been averted.

As Extra 718 was approaching signal 781, located 11,472 feet east of the point where the collision occurred, the speed was about 45 miles per hour. The enginemen were on their respective sides of the engine and the front brakeman was standing beside the engineer. These employees were maintaining a lookout ahead. There was no condition of the engine which obscured the view ahead or distracted their attention. The brakes functioned properly at all points where used en route. Signal 781 displayed approach and the engineer made a service brake-pipe reduction, which reduced the speed to about 25 miles per hour. This speed was maintained as the train passed signal 771, which displayed approach. When the engine reached a point about 1,800 feet east of signal 761 the front brakeman observed that this signal was displaying stop-and-proceed. Because he thought the engineer saw the indication displayed by this signal, he did not call the indication, and the engineer did not call it. Because of track curvature, the fireman could not see signal 761 until the engine reached a point about 500 feet east of it. Then he observed simultaneously two members of the crew of Extra 706 giving stop signals and the stop-and-proceed indication displayed by this signal. He called a warning to the engineer, who immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position, but the collision occurred before Extra 718 could be stopped. Why Extra 718 was not stopped in accordance with the stop-and-proceed indication displayed by signal 761 could not be determined, as the engineer was fatally injured in the accident. The rules required the employees who were on the engine

to communicate to each other the indication of each signal affecting the movement of their train. If the front brakeman had called the stop-and-proceed indication displayed by signal 761 at the time he first observed it, it is probable this accident would have been averted.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure to provide adequate flag protection for the preceding train, and by failure to operate the following train in accordance with signal indications.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this seventh day of June, 1943.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.