

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

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INVESTIGATION NO. 3125  
CHICAGO, MILWAUKEE, ST. PAUL AND  
PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY  
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT  
AT NEW RELIANCE, WASH., ON  
AUGUST 30, 1947

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SUMMARY

Railroad: Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul  
and Pacific

Date: August 30, 1947

Location: New Reliance, Wash.

Kind of accident: Rear-end collision

Trains involved: Freight : Freight

Train numbers: Extra 54 West : Extra 56 West

Engine numbers: 54 : 56

Consists: 100 cars, caboose : 82 cars, caboose

Estimated speeds: Standing : 15 m. p. h.

Operation: Timetable and train orders;  
yard limits

Track: Single; 6° curve; 1.46 percent  
ascending grade westward

Weather: Clear

Time: 4:43 a. m.

Casualties: 1 killed; 1 injured

Cause: Failure properly to control speed of  
following train moving within yard  
limits

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

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INVESTIGATION NO. 3125

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

CHICAGO, MILWAUKEE, ST. PAUL AND  
PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY

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October 7, 1947

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Accident at New Reliance, Wash., on August 30, 1947,  
caused by failure properly to control the  
speed of the following train moving within  
yard limits.

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REPORT OF THE COMMISSION<sup>1</sup>

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

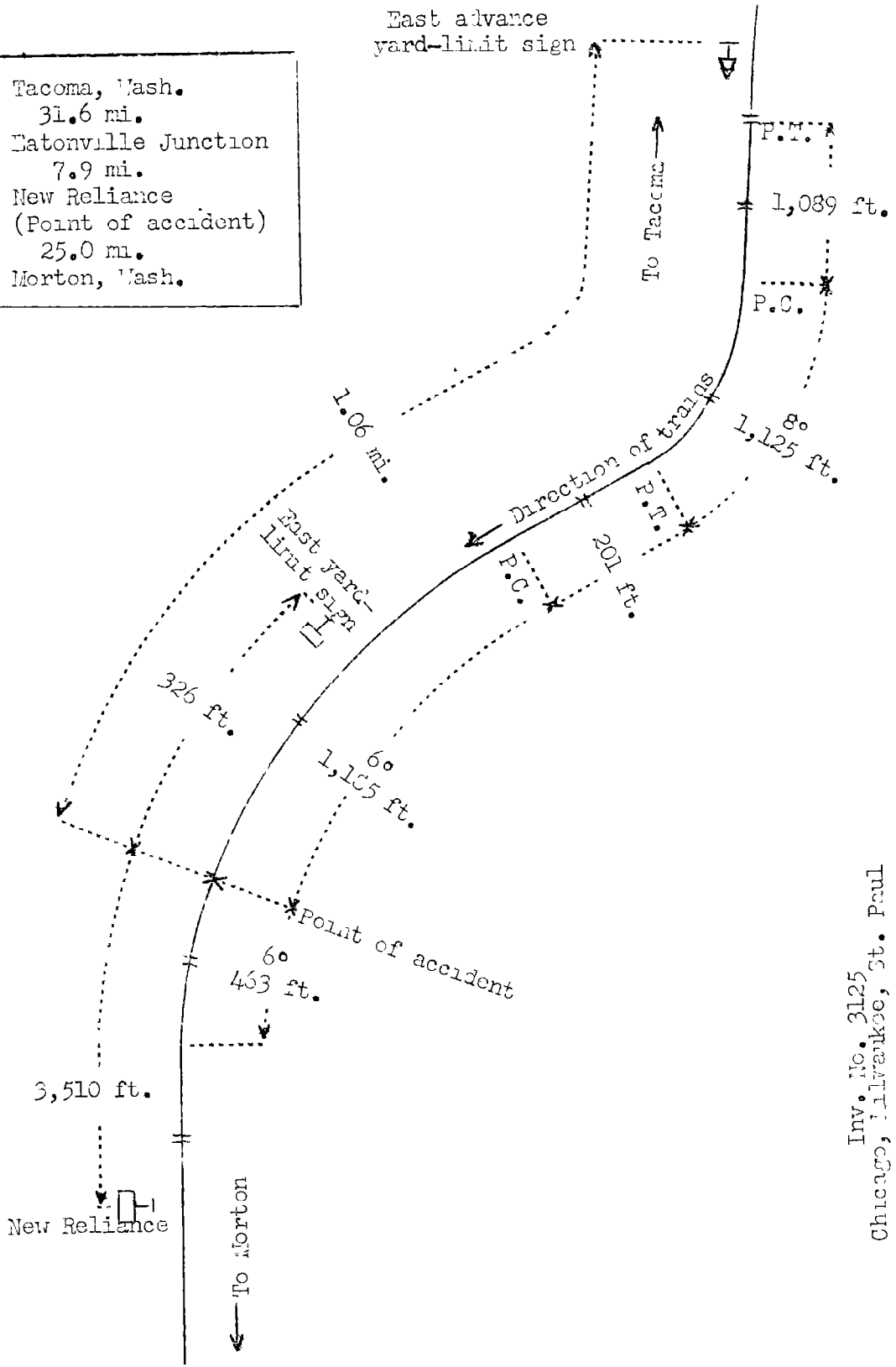
On August 30, 1947, there was a rear-end collision between two freight trains on the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad at New Reliance, Wash., which resulted in the death of one employee, and the injury of one employee.

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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 Patterson for consideration and disposition.

- Tacoma, Wash.  
31.6 mi.
- Eatonville Junction  
7.9 mi.
- X New Reliance  
(Point of accident)  
25.0 mi.
- Morton, Wash.



Inv. No. 3125  
Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul  
and Pacific Railroad  
New Reliance, Wash.  
August 30, 1947

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Coast Division extending between Tacoma and Morton, Wash., 64.5 miles, a single-track line. In the vicinity of the point of accident trains are operated by timetable and train orders. There is no block system in use. The accident occurred within yard limits on the main track at New Reliance, 39.5 miles west of Tacoma, at a point 1.06 miles west of the east advance yard-limit sign, 326 feet west of the east yard-limit sign and 3,510 feet east of the station. From the east there are, in succession, a tangent 1,089 feet in length, an 8° curve to the right 1,125 feet, a tangent 201 feet and a 6° curve to the left 1,185 feet to the point of accident and 463 feet westward. The grade for west-bound trains varies between 0.10 percent and 1.70 percent ascending throughout a distance of 1.06 miles immediately east of the point of accident, where it is 1.46 percent ascending.

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

DEFINITIONS.

\* \* \*

Fixed Signal.--A signal of fixed location indicating a condition affecting the movement of a train or engine.

Note.--The definition of a "Fixed Signal" covers such signals as \* \* \* yard limit signs,  
\* \* \*

\* \* \*

Restricted Speed.--Proceed prepared to stop short of train, obstruction, or anything that may require the speed of a train to be reduced.

93. \* \* \*

Within yard limits the main track may be used without protecting against second and inferior class, extra trains and engines.

Within yard limits second and inferior class, extra trains and engines must move at restricted speed.

\* \* \*

### Description of Accident

Extra 54 West, a west-bound freight train, consisted of engine 54, 100 cars and a caboose. Because the tonnage of this train was in excess of the rated tonnage for the engine on the ascending grade westward from Eatonville Junction, the last open office, 7.9 miles east of New Reliance, the engine and the first 42 cars departed from Eatonville Junction at 3:33 a. m., and on arrival at New Reliance the cars were left on the main track between the siding switches. The engine returned to Eatonville Junction, then departed westward from that point about 3:45 a. m. with the rear portion of the train, and stopped about 4:32 a. m. on the main track at New Reliance, with the caboose standing 326 feet west of the east yard-limit sign. About 11 minutes later, while the front portion of the train was being coupled to the rear portion, the caboose was struck by Extra 56 West.

Extra 56 West, a west-bound freight train, consisting of engine 56, 82 cars and a caboose, stopped on the ascending grade at a point about 4.5 miles east of Eatonville Junction. Then the front portion of the train, consisting of the engine and 42 cars, proceeded westward, departed from Eatonville Junction at 4:13 a. m., and was moving at an estimated speed of 15 miles per hour when it collided with Extra 54 West.

The caboose of Extra 54 West and the five cars immediately ahead of the caboose were derailed and badly damaged. The engine of Extra 56 West was not derailed, and it stopped with the front end 124 feet west of the point of collision. The front end of the engine was somewhat damaged.

The flagman of Extra 54 West was killed, and the conductor of this train was injured.

The weather was clear and it was dark at the time of the accident, which occurred about 4:43 a. m.

### Discussion

Because the tonnage of the cars of Extra 54 West and Extra 56 West was in excess of the rated tonnage for the engines on the ascending grade in the territory involved, each train was being operated in two portions. The front and rear portions of Extra 54 West were being coupled on the main track within yard limits at New Reliance when the rear end of this train was struck by the front portion of Extra 56 West, which consisted of the engine and 42 cars, at a point 326 feet west of the east yard-limit sign.

When the collision occurred, the conductor and the flagman of Extra 54 West were in the caboose. The marker lamps on the caboose were lighted and displayed red to the rear. The conductor said that when he first saw the reflection of the headlight of Extra 56 West the engine of that train was about 200 feet distant, and he called a warning to the flagman, but the collision occurred before they could jump from the caboose. The flagman was killed.

The enginemen of Extra 56 West said that as the engine was approaching the east yard-limit sign the speed was about 15 miles per hour, and the headlight was lighted brightly. The enginemen were maintaining a lookout ahead from their usual positions, the front brakeman was seated behind the fireman and the swing brakeman was on the deck of the engine. The conductor and the flagman were on the rear portion of the train, which was standing about 12 miles east of New Reliance. Because of an embankment on the inside of the curve to the left on which the accident occurred, the view of the track ahead from the left side of the engine was restricted to a distance of about 600 feet. The enginemen first saw the lighted marker lamps of the preceding train about 100 feet distant, then the engineer moved the brake valve to emergency position, but this action was not taken soon enough to prevent the collision. The brakes of this train had been tested and had functioned properly en route.

The accident occurred within yard limits, and, under the rules, Extra 56 West was required to be operated in such manner that it could be stopped short of a train or an obstruction.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure properly to control the speed of the following train moving within yard limits.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this seventh day of October, 1947.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,  
Secretary.