

February 27, 1913.

In re investigation of accident on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway at Williams, Arizona, on December 10, 1912.

On December 10, 1912, there was a rear end collision on the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway at Williams, Ariz., which resulted in the death of two caretakers. After an investigation of this accident the Chief Inspector of Safety Appliances, reports as follows:

West-bound freight train extra 1685 consisted of 32 loaded cars and a caboose, hauled by engine No. 1685. The train was in charge of Conductor Morten and Engineer Edger. It left Winslow, Ariz., at 7:25 p.m., December 9th, Flagstaff, Ariz., at 4:10 a.m., December 10th, and arrived at Williams at 8:55 a.m. The collision occurred while this train was standing on the main track at Williams.

West-bound freight train extra 1676 consisted of 27 loaded and 3 empty cars and a caboose, hauled by engine No. 1676. It was in charge of Conductor V. Harbur and Engineer Hoxsie. It left Winslow at 7:30 p.m., December 9th, Flagstaff at 4:30 a.m., December 10th, and reached Williams at 6:06 a.m., where it collided with the rear end of extra 1685.

The force of the collision destroyed the caboose of extra 1685 in which the two caretakers were riding and badly damaged the 3 rear cars of the train.

The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway at this place is a double track line. All freight trains are operated as extra trains and their movements are governed by train orders. Automatic block signals are being installed in this vicinity. At the point of accident the track is on a fill of about 20 feet. The grade is 1.42% descending for west-bound trains. The caboose of extra 1685 was standing at a point 4743 feet inside the yard limit board. About 1600 feet east of the point where the caboose stood is a three-degree curve about 900 feet in length. The weather at the time of the accident was cold, dark and very foggy.

Engineer Hoxsie, of extra 1676, stated that the speed of his train at the time of the collision was not more than 4 or 5 miles per hour. He had brought his train nearly to a stop and as he released the air brakes he saw the caboose of extra 1685 only 5 or 6 car lengths ahead. He could not see it earlier on account of the fog. Having just brought his train nearly to a stop and having just released the brakes, the train line had not yet been recharged, but he at once applied the brakes in the emergency with shut-trip line pressure there was and jumped.

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Engine No. 1676 is equipped with an electric headlight. All of the cars were equipped with air brakes and when inspected at Winslow were found to be in good working order. Engineman Hoxsie stated that the brakes had been working well throughout the night.

Rule No. 93 of the Archibson, Topoka & Santa Fe Railway provides in part as follows:

"All trains and engines will have the right to work within such yard limits regardless of second or third class trains or extras, but will give way as soon as possible upon their approach.

All except first-class trains will approach yard limits under control. The responsibility for accidents at such points will rest with approaching trains."

Time-card rule No. 9 provides in part as follows:

"In case of fog or its equivalent ** all **trains of whatever class will use the bell and whistle frequently and if necessary send a flagman ahead to protect against possible obstructions and engines in yards."

Under this rule the crew of extra 1685 are relieved of the necessity of protecting their train by flag mile within the yard limits. The responsibility for any accident which might occur rested with the approaching train. It appears furthermore that Engineman Hoxsie failed to obey time-card rule No. 9. He did not sound the whistle or ring the bell for the crew on that he considered his train to be under full control.

A man employed with a force engaged in installing a new block signal system stated that he was standing in the side door of one of the empty cars about 100 feet distant from the point of collision. He saw extra 1676 approaching at such a low rate of speed that he thought it was an engine coming down to couple on to the caboose of the standing train for the purpose of getting out some cars. He then heard the crash and thought the train had run off a frog and was derailed.

Engineman Hoxsie had been employed as such for eight years. His record was good. When the accident occurred he had been on duty 11 hours and 5 minutes after a period off duty of 19 hours and 55 minutes.

This accident was caused by the failure of the engineman of extra 1676 properly to control the speed of his train within yard limits.

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Although responsible for the collision, his responsibility seems to arise more from lack of judgment than from absolute disregard of rules or time-card instructions. His train had been following extra 1685 over this division all night and he must have known that it would be ahead of him in this yard. At the eastern end of the Williams yard Engineman Hoxsie brought his train nearly to a stop and then released the brakes without having any opportunity of recharging the train line. In view of the heavy descending grade of nearly 1 1/2%, and the fact that his range of vision was very much obscured by the dark foggy night, Engineman Hoxsie should not have released his brakes until the train had been brought to a stop and an opportunity afforded of recharging the train line. This he failed to do, however, and as a result, when he saw the rear end of extra 1685, he was unable to control his train.