

**IN RE: INVESTIGATION OF ACCIDENT ON THE HOCKING VALLEY
RAILWAY NEAR STARR, OHIO, ON JUNE 13, 1914.**

On June 13, 1914, there was a head-end collision between two passenger trains on the Hocking Valley Railway near Starr, Ohio, resulting in the death of 1 engineman, 2 firemen, 1 brakeman and 1 baggageman, and the injury of 39 passengers, 4 employees and 2 mail clerks. After investigation this accident, the Chief Inspector of Safety Appliances reports as follows:

Southbound passenger train No. 134 consisted of 1 combination mail and baggage car, equipped with a steel underframe and 3 coaches, each of wooden construction, en route from Logan, Ohio, to Pomeroy, Ohio. It was hauled by locomotive No. 74 and was in charge of Conductor Bennett and Engineman Davis. It was 11 minutes late leaving Logan and at Union Furnace, 4.4 miles from Starr, the crew in charge received train order No. 23, reading as follows:

"No. 134 Eng. 74 meet No. 137 Eng. 73 at Starr.
No. 137 gets this at Starr."

Train No. 134 left Union Furnace at 5:10 p. m., 9 minutes late and collided with train No. 137 at a point about one-half mile north of Starr while running at a speed estimated to have been between 25 and 30 miles per hour.

Northbound passenger train No. 137 consisted of 1 combination mail and baggage car, equipped with a steel underframe, 2 coaches and 1 parlor car, the latter 3 cars being of wooden construction, en route from Pomeroy, Ohio, to Logan, Ohio. The train was hauled by locomotive No. 73 and was in charge of Conductor Wilson and Engineman Shaffer. It arrived at Starr, the regular meeting point with southbound passenger train No. 134, at 5:24. Train No. 134 had not arrived and inasmuch as the train order board was in the clear position, and no train orders were delivered to the crew, train No. 137 being the superior train proceeded on its way, leaving Starr at 5:25 p.m. and colliding with train No. 134 while running at a speed estimated to have been between 25 and 30 miles per hour.

Both locomotives went down the embankment on the east side of the track and were badly damaged. The locomotive of train No. 134 exploded, while both combination mail and baggage cars were quite badly damaged. All of the other cars in each train were slightly damaged, and all remained on the track.

This part of the River Division of the Hocking Valley Railway is a single track line. No block signal system is in use, trains being operated by train orders and time-card rights, following movements being spaced five minutes apart at open telegraph offices. The accident occurred a few feet north of a 30-foot bridge, on a fill varying in depth from 7 to 10 feet, with a descending grade for southbound train of about .6 per cent. Approaching the point of the collision from the station

at Starr there is a curve to the left about 2,250 feet in length, varying in curvature from 4 to 5 degrees. Then there is about 400 feet of straight track between the northern end of this curve and the bridge. Approaching the point of accident from the opposite direction there is a tangent 1,700 feet in length, followed by a curve to the left of from 5 to 6 degrees, this curve being about 1,000 feet in length. There is about 120 feet of straight track between the southern end of this curve and the point of collision. The range of vision of southbound trains is not much over 100 feet, while northbound trains have a vision of about 450 or 500 feet. The weather at the time was clear.

At the time train order No. 28 was issued to the crew of train No. 134 at Union Furnace, the same order was also sent to the crew of train No. 137 at Starr, being received at that point by the agent and operator, H. L. Bing. At the time he received the order he failed to display his train order board, and after the order had been made complete, at 5:00 p.m., he was busy selling tickets and attending to other duties until the arrival of train No. 137. He then went to the mail car, handed a mail pouch to the railway mail clerk and at the same time received a pouch of mail, but he forgot to deliver train order No. 28 to the train crew, as well as the clearance card which he had already filled out. Operator Bing stated that he did not know whether or not he told the dispatcher, before repeating the order, that the train order board was displayed, but it was the custom to do so and he supposed that he followed this custom. As soon as he returned to the telegraph office, after the departure of train No. 137, he realized that he had forgotten to deliver the train order.

Rule No. 208-A of the book of rules of the operating department reads as follows:

"Train orders must not be sent for delivery to trains at the meeting point if it can be avoided. When it can not be avoided, special precautions must be taken by the train dispatchers and operators to insure safety."

Train Dispatcher Clark, who issued train order No. 28, stated that he did not send the order to train No. 137 at Creola, the first telegraph office south of Starr, because he could not figure on a meeting point for the two trains until after train No. 137 had left Creola. He stated that he had been advised by Operator Bing before the latter repeated the order that the train order board was displayed and inasmuch as he had advised the crew of train No. 134 in the train order that train No. 137 would receive the order at Starr, he considered that he had taken all the precaution required under rule No. 208-A.

This accident was caused by the failure of Operator Bing, located at Starr, to display his train order board in the stop position for train No. 137 and to deliver to the train crew of that train a copy of train order No. 28.

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Operator Bing was employed as an operator at Starr on October 8, 1908, and on March 25, 1909, was made agent as well as operator. He had been employed in that capacity since that time. He was considered to be an efficient and capable employee and bore a good reputation.

While there is no excuse for such negligence in the performance of duty as was displayed in this case, yet the continued occurrence of accidents of this character calls attention to the necessity of some adequate form of block signal protection.