NTSB TRB Briefing

2010 Truck and Bus Accident Reports and Hearings

- **Miami, OK (June 26, 2009)**
  - A queue had formed in both lanes of Interstate 44 due to a minor accident around 1:00 pm. Other motorists were attempting to clear that accident, when a 76-year old truck driver, who had been on duty since 3 am, came upon the end of the queue and did not react. The truck collided with the stopped vehicles, killing 10 passenger vehicle occupants and injuring 5 others. The truck came to rest 270 feet after impact with the first passenger vehicle.
  - **Probable Cause** of the accident was the truck driver's fatigue caused by
    - the combined effects of acute sleep loss,
    - circadian disruption associated with his shift work schedule,
    - and mild sleep apnea,
    - which resulted in the driver's failure to react to slowing and stopped traffic ahead by applying the brakes or performing any evasive maneuver to avoid colliding with the traffic queue.
    - Contributing to the severity to the accident were the combination vehicle's high impact speed and structural incompatibility with the passenger vehicles.
  - **Safety Issues identified**:
    - Truck Driver's fatigue
    - The need for updated and comprehensive fatigue education materials and fatigue management programs
    - The significance of heavy vehicle aggressivity in collisions between dissimilar vehicles
    - The lack of federal requirements for commercial vehicle edr's and video event recorders
    - The lack of federal requirements for forward collision warning systems.
    - **Report, presentations and simulations are on our website NTSB.GOV.**

- **Dolan Springs, AZ (January, 30, 2009)**
  - Around 4 pm, a 2007, 29 passenger medium sized bus, occupied by the driver and 16 passengers was traveling north in the right lane of US Highway 93, a 4 lane divided highway on a return trip from the Grand Canyon to Las Vegas. As the bus was traveling at an estimated speed of 70 mph, it moved to the left and

out of its lane of travel. The driver steered sharply back to the right, crossing both lanes and entered the right shoulder. The driver then corrected to the left, causing the bus to yaw and cross both northbound lanes. The bus then entered the depressed earthen median and overturned 1 and ¼ times before coming to rest on its right side across both southbound lanes. During the rollover sequence, 15 of 17 occupants, including the driver, were fully or partially ejected. 7 passengers were killed, 9 passengers and the driver received injuries ranging from minor to serious.

- **Probable Cause** of the accident was the driver's inadvertent drift from the driving lane due to distraction caused by his manipulation of the driver's door and subsequent abrupt steering maneuver, which lead to losing directional control of the vehicle.
  - Contributing to the severity of the accident was the lack of both occupant protection and advanced window glazing standards for medium sized buses.
- **Safety Issues Identified**:
  - Failure of the bus driver to attend to the road ahead and maintain control of his vehicle
  - Need for regulatory definitions and classifications for bus body types
  - Limitations of medium size buses in retaining and protecting passengers during rollovers
  - Need for technology to assist commercial drivers in maintaining control of their vehicles or ESC
  - Need for EDR's for accident investigation and safety research
  - **Report, presentations and simulations are on our website NTSB.GOV.**

- **Indianapolis, IN (October 22, 2009)**
  - At approximately 10:30 a 2006 International truck –tractor with a 1994 Mississippi Tank company 11,600 gallon cargo tank semi-trailer was traveling south on interstate 69. As the combination unit entered the connection ramp in the right lane it began to encroach on the left lane occupied by a passenger car. The driver of the passenger car sounded their horn, at which time the combination unit moved to the right and on the shoulder where the right front of truck tractor struck the guardrail. The combination unit continued partially on the shoulder when the cargo tank semi trailer began to roll to the right. The cargo tank semi trailer then struck the guard rail and the combination unit went under the overpass. The cargo tank struck the bridge footing and the pier

supporting the overpass. As these events took place, the truck track separated from the cargo tank semitrailer. The truck tractor rolled onto its right side and caught fire.

- The impact of the cargo tank semi trailer caused the bridge pier to separate and the tank to breach. The breach released the contents of the tank, liquefied petroleum gas, which caught fire. As a result of the fire, the driver of the truck received serious injuries and the occupants of three vehicles on the overpass received minor injuries.
- **Public Hearing (August 3-4 2009)**
  - Electronic Stability Control Systems, Driver Training and Testing, Roadway factors that could contribute to instability and Signage that could prevent rollovers, Guidelines for designing and protecting bridge piers from vehicle impacts, vehicle design changes to improve dynamic stability, and crashworthiness standards for cargo tanks.
  - **Transcript of the Hearing and the Factual Reports from the Accident Investigation are on our website NTSB.Gov.**

Current Accident Investigations and Upcoming Forum

- **Munfordville, KY (March 26, 2010)**
  - About 5:17 a.m., a truck-tractor semitrailer was traveling south on Interstate 65. The combination unit departed the left lane of southbound I-65 at a shallow angle and entered the 60-foot-wide depressed earthen median between the southbound and northbound roadways. The combination unit traveled across the median and struck a four-cable alternating post guardrail adjacent to the left shoulder of northbound I-65. The truck entered northbound I-65, traversing the left shoulder and travel lanes. At this time, a 2000 Dodge van, operated by a 41-year-old driver and occupied by 11 passengers, was traveling northbound in the left lane. As the combination unit crossed the van's path, its tractor was struck by the van. The van rotated clockwise and became engaged with the combination unit, which continued across both travel lanes and the right shoulder of northbound I-65. The tractor struck a rock cut slope beyond the shoulder. As the tractor struck the vertical rock slope, the semitrailer rolled onto its right side. During this sequence, the van separated from the combination unit, struck the vertical rock slope, and rebounded back into the travel lanes, coming to rest in the left lane of northbound I-65, facing south. As the combination vehicle came to rest across both northbound lanes, a fire ensued

that destroyed the tractor and the sides and roof of the semitrailer. As a result of the accident and subsequent truck fire, the truck-tractor driver, the driver of the van, and nine van passengers died. Two child passengers in the van were strapped in child restraint seats; they sustained minor injuries.

- **Gray Summit, MO (August 5, 2010)**
  - A 2007 Volvo truck-tractor operated by a 43-year-old driver was traveling eastbound in the right lane of Interstate 44. About 10:11 a.m., a 2007 GMC Sierra pickup truck operated by a 19-year-old driver struck the rear of the truck-tractor as it was stopped in a construction zone.
  - A 2003 Blue Bird 71-passenger school bus occupied by the 75-year-old driver and 23 passengers was also traveling eastbound in the right lane of I-44 in front of a 2001 Blue Bird 72-passenger school bus operated by the 38-year-old driver and 31 passengers. After passing a motorcoach that had pulled to the right shoulder because of the first accident between the truck-tractor and the pickup, the lead school bus struck the rear of the pickup truck. The left front of the second school bus then struck the right rear of the lead bus. This collision pushed the pickup forward, and it overturned onto the frame rail of the truck-tractor. The lead bus came to rest on top of the pickup truck and the truck-tractor. The second bus remained engaged with the lead bus. As a result of the accident, the driver of the pickup truck and one passenger from the lead school bus were killed. Thirty-one school bus passengers, the two school bus drivers, and the driver of the truck-tractor received injuries ranging from minor to serious.

- **Truck and Bus Safety Forum (May 10 – 11, 2011)**
  - **Purpose** – To evaluate the progress that has been made since the 1999 truck and bus safety hearings and the work that is still necessary to improve safety among motor carriers and the traveling public.
  - **Proposed Panels** – Carrier Oversight, Driver Training and Licensing, Driver Safety, Medical Oversight, and Enhanced Vehicle Safety.
  - **Firming up Witnesses and Parties** – Invitations will be sent out soon for both.
  - **Agenda and Forum website – NTSB.GOV**