Schoolbus Safety – Fatigue and Long Hours Fatality File



NTSB Cites Driver Fatigue, Improper Seatbelt Use Among Causes of Fatal School-Bus Crash

The NTSB's lengthy, in-depth investigation found that bus-driver impairment played a larger role in the New Jersey school bus accident than previously believed. Driver John Tieman, 66, was exhausted from a lack of sleep, taking multiple pain medications and suffering from persistent back pain that prevented him from turning and fully scanning the intersection.

"The school bus driver was fatigued due to acute sleep loss, chronic sleep [sic], and poor sleep quality associated with medical conditions and alcohol use, the side effects from prescription medications, and the synergistic effect of these factors," the board stated in its final summary of findings. "The fatigue contributed to reduced vigilance and detection of the approaching truck."

In addition, the board reported the school bus driver failed to disclose vital information about his medical condition, a complete list of his medications, and his history of alcoholism. Yet the report noted that testing revealed there was no alcohol in his system at the time of the crash.

There were 25 elementary students on the Chesterfield school bus when it collided with a 2004 Mack truck with a dump container carrying broken asphalt at the Bordentown-Chesterfield Road (BCR 528) intersection. The front of the dump truck slammed the left rear of the bus, spinning it around until it struck a utility pole. Eleven-year-old Isabelle Tezsla was killed and her triplet sisters severely injured, along with 13 others who sustained minor to serious injuries.

Though the NTSB determined the school bus driver erred in entering the intersection too soon, the board clarified that speeding by the dump truck driver and vehicle defects also played a role in the fatal accident.

Source: *Stnonline.com*