

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

FAI-4
H-314A

ISSUED: August 13, 1982

Forwarded to:

Mr. Kenneth L. Pierson
Director
Bureau of Motor Carrier Safety
Federal Highway Administration
Washington, D.C. 20590

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

H-82-25

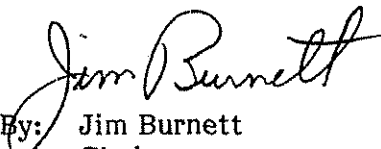
About 10:25 p.m., on August 27, 1981, a tractor-semitrailer loaded with steel pipe was traveling eastbound across the Calcasieu River Bridge, a 1 1/4-mile long, four-lane divided highway bridge on Interstate 10 at the city limits of Lake Charles, Louisiana. As the truck was descending the east side of the bridge, the tractor's left side fuel tank was struck and penetrated by a dislodged steel plate that had been used to cover a hole in a pavement expansion joint. As a result of about 75 gallons of diesel fuel leaking onto a 1/2-mile section of the bridge, 26 vehicles were involved in a series of skidding collisions. Three persons were killed, and 18 persons were injured; there were no fires. 1/

Citizen band radios installed in a number of large interstate trucks were of some benefit because drivers were able to react more appropriately to the diesel spill once they entered the spill area. However, a disappointing element was that some drivers continued to drive onto the bridge, rather than stopping short of or detouring around the spill. Perhaps this was due, in part, to the type of warnings being broadcast and a lack of understanding about the relative consequences of attempting to travel through diesel spills and other such environmental problems as fog and icy roads. A Bureau of Motor Carrier Safety On-Guard Bulletin could assist in reinforcing the need for proper use and reaction to messages that are transmitted over the citizen's band radio network.

As a result of this investigation, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Bureau of Motor Carrier Safety:

Issue an On-Guard Bulletin to advise truckdrivers of the circumstances of this accident and the potential benefits to be derived from the use of the citizens band radios when properly used, and encourage positive reaction to messages that are transmitted over this network. (Class II, Priority Action) (H-82-25)

BURNETT, Chairman, and McADAMS, and ENGEN, Members, concurred in this recommendation. BURSLEY, Member, did not concur. GOLDMAN, Vice Chairman, did not participate.


By: Jim Burnett
Chairman

1/ For more detailed information, read Highway Accident Report—"Truck Engine Fuel Tank Puncture by Bridge Repair Plate, Diesel Spill, and Multiple Vehicle Skidding Collisions, Interstate 10, Lake Charles, Louisiana, August 27, 1981" (NTSB-HAR-82-4).