

109# H-509A



# National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

## Safety Recommendation

Date: November 27, 1987

In reply refer to: H-87-56

Mr. Louis Nigro  
DeCamp Bus Lines  
P. O. Box 581  
Montclair, New Jersey 07042

About 7:34 a.m. on October 9, 1986, two charter intercity tour buses, operated by E. Vanderhoof and Sons Bus Company (Vanderhoof), were traveling westbound in the right lane on State Route (SR) 495 in North Bergen, New Jersey, en route to Washington, D.C. As the westbound buses approached the Kennedy Boulevard exit on SR-495, the second bus suddenly veered leftward into the adjacent lane, struck the left rear of a passenger car traveling in that lane, then crossed into the eastbound contraflow lane, and struck a transit bus, operated by DeCamp Bus Lines (DeCamp), en route to New York City. One bus passenger aboard the transit bus was fatally injured and 26 other occupants aboard both buses sustained serious to minor injuries. 1/

Although the Office of Motor Carrier Safety of the U.S. Department of Transportation noted several minor discrepancies with the company, DeCamp had a formal structure for prescreening drivers and supervising their daily operations. New DeCamp drivers receive a management-supervised probationary period of driving for 2 weeks before they are permitted to drive alone, regardless of prior driving experience. In addition, DeCamp company rules are published and distributed to all employees and drivers when they are hired.

Although not a causal factor in the accident, Safety Board investigators did note that the DeCamp bus was equipped with a lapbelt at the driver's position and the busdriver was not wearing the lapbelt at the time of the accident. Federal law requires seatbelts to be installed and used by all busdrivers engaged in interstate commerce. Thus, DeCamp should periodically monitor its drivers to verify that they wear seatbelts when operating company vehicles.

Therefore, as a result of its investigation, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the DeCamp Bus Lines:

Periodically monitor your drivers to verify that they wear seatbelts when operating company buses. (Class II, Priority Action) (H-87-56)

1/ For more detailed information, read Highway Accident Report--"Multiple Collision with an Intercity Charter Bus, Passenger Car, and Transit Bus, State Route 495, North Bergen, New Jersey, October 9, 1986" (NTSB/HAR-87/06).

Also as a result of its investigation, the Safety Board issued Safety Recommendations H-87-55 to the E. Vanderhoof and Sons Bus Company and H-87-57 to the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

The National Transportation Safety Board is an independent Federal agency with the statutory responsibility ". . . to promote transportation safety by conducting independent accident investigations and by formulating safety improvement recommendations" (Public Law 93-633). The Safety Board is vitally interested in any actions taken as a result of its safety recommendations and would appreciate a response from you regarding action taken or contemplated with respect to the recommendation in this letter. Please refer to Safety Recommendation H-87-56 in your reply.

BURNETT, Chairman, GOLDMAN, Vice Chairman, and NALL and KOLSTAD, Members, concurred in this recommendation. LAUBER, Member, did not participate.

By:   
Jim Burnett  
Chairman