

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: August 28, 1978

Forwarded to:

Honorable Milton J. Shapp
Governor of Pennsylvania
255 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

R-78-51

About 8:03 a.m., on February 10, 1978, a trolley car and a bus owned by the Port Authority of Allegheny County collided in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, when the trolley car suddenly turned into the path of the oncoming bus. Four persons were killed, 37 persons were injured, and damage was estimated to be \$48,000. 1/

The report of the accident was received by the Allegheny County Sheriff's Department almost immediately and representatives arrived at the site about 8:10 a.m. The Pittsburgh Police and Fire Department received the report about 8:09 a.m. and arrived at the scene shortly thereafter. About 36 police and fire department vehicles were sent to the accident scene. The hospitals were alerted to receive the injured persons and they responded by implementing their emergency disaster plans.

The investigation of the accident disclosed that the city of Pittsburgh apparently had no emergency disaster procedure plan. There was confusion at the scene as a result of the movement of vehicles into and out of the area where the injured persons were being treated and placed in emergency vehicles to be transported to a hospital. No one assumed command and established a central authority or command post at the accident site, although the Fire Chief of the Fourth District did assume some control of activities.

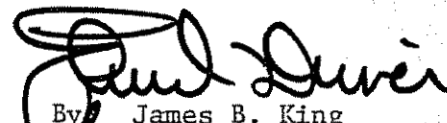
Emergency planning should include a detailed onsite disaster emergency plan with which all personnel are familiar. The person or persons who are to be in command of the operations should be named. Much valuable time can be saved with such a procedure.

1/ For more detailed information on this accident, read "Railroad Accident Report--Collision of Port Authority of Allegheny County Trolley Car No. 1790 and Bus No. 2413, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, February 10, 1978," (NTSB-RAR-78-5).

As a result of this investigation, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania:

Encourage and assist municipalities that have emergency response facilities to develop emergency procedures in a disaster plan that includes the designation of a controlling, onscene officer. (Class II, Priority Action) (R-78-51)

KING, Chairman, McADAMS, HOGUE, and DRIVER, Members, concurred in the above recommendation.


By James B. King
Chairman