

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: March 6, 1979

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Forwarded to:  
Honorable Joan Claybrook  
Administrator  
National Highway Traffic Safety  
Administration  
400 Seventh Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590  
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SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)  
H-79-5 and -6

At 4:15 p.m. on August 26, 1977, a 1973 Dodge van and a 1977 Peterbilt truck, pulling an empty 1977 Reliance full trailer, collided head-on during a moderate-to-heavy rainstorm on U.S. Route 91, 8 miles north of Scipio, Utah. The eight occupants of the van were killed and the truckdriver was injured. 1/

Available physical evidence and research data could not confirm or deny several possible factors that could have caused or contributed to the accident. Therefore, the Safety Board was only able to conclude that the accident occurred because either or both drivers failed to maintain their vehicle in the proper traffic lane.

In developing and evaluating the evidence for this accident, the Safety Board did become concerned about a lack of research data in two significant areas that are mainly a function of the NHTSA. The Safety Board was unable to find data that would indicate how commercial vehicle tires perform at various speed levels when loaded to within 15 to 25 percent of their capacity. The full potential effect of a fluctuating and progressively lower pavement frictional quality on a continuously steepening grade could not be determined. These were conditions that existed in this accident. Additional research would assist future accident investigations and could be significant in establishing or


1/ For more detailed information read: "Highway Accident Report -- Osterkamp Trucking, Inc., Truck/Full Trailer and Dodge Van Collision, U.S. Route 91, Scipio, Utah, August 26, 1977" (NTSB-HAR-79-1).

assessing performance standards in these safety areas. Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:

Accelerate efforts to identify the frictional properties of commercial vehicle tires at all degrees of tire yaw, under loading conditions ranging from 15 to 100 percent of rated load capacity. (Class II, Priority Action) (H-79-5)

Examine the full potential effect of fluctuating and progressively lower pavement frictional quality on vehicle performance. (Class II, Priority Action) (H-79-6)

KING, Chairman, McADAMS and HOGUE, Members, concurred in the above recommendations. DRIVER, Vice Chairman, did not participate.

  
By: James B. King  
Chairman