

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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ISSUED: MAY 25 1982

Forwarded to:

Honorable William F. Winter
Governor of Mississippi
Jackson, Mississippi 39201

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

H-82-11 and -12

About 2:40 p.m., c.d.t., on October 12, 1981, a truck tractor-pole semitrailer, laden with sixteen 75- to 80-foot pine logs was southbound on U.S. Route 45, about 1 mile south of Waynesboro, Mississippi. A schoolbus occupied by the driver and 49 students was also southbound following behind the truck. As the truck approached Industrial Park Road, it moved into a right turn lane, decelerated, and initiated a 125° right turn. The overlength logs swung leftward across the southbound through-traffic lane and into the path of the overtaking schoolbus. The schoolbus struck the swinging logs, traveled forward to the right, struck the extreme front end of an eastbound automobile, which was stopped on Industrial Park Road at the intersection, and then struck and overrode a utility pole in the southwest quadrant of the intersection. Three bus passengers were killed and 18 bus passengers and the driver were injured. 1/

The 26-year-old busdriver, a long-term resident of the area, held a valid Mississippi operator's license which had no restrictions. According to the driver, she had about 12 years' driving experience. The driver had not had any formal training for driving the bus, nor was she required to have such training or hold the certificate required for public schoolbus drivers. She had driven the accident bus during the 1979-1980 school year, but did not drive the bus during the 1980-1981 school year, and began driving again on the same route when school reopened in 1981. The busdriver stated that she had never been given a "...citation for any traffic violation." Her driving records did not show any violations or previous accidents.

Section 37-41-57, of the Mississippi Code of 1972 states, in part, that: "The State Board of Education by and with the advice of the Department of Public Safety shall adopt and enforce regulations...to govern...all operations of all schoolbuses used for the transportation of school children when owned and operated by any county board of education or board of trustees in a separate school district or privately owned and operated under contract with any county board of education or board of trustees in a separate school district in this State." The Mississippi Department of Public Safety

1/ For more detailed information, read Highway Accident Report—"Herman Duvall Tractor-Pole Semitrailer/S. L. & B Academy, Inc., Schoolbus Collision, U.S. Route 45, near Waynesboro, Mississippi, October 12, 1981" (NTSB-HAR-82-2).

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assists, during the summer months, in the training of schoolbus drivers who are to be employed as stated in the law. The Rules and Regulations of the State Board of Education Providing for the Operational Procedure of School Buses to Insure Safety of Pupils states, in part, that each schoolbus driver: "Must have attended a bus driver training school and hold a certificate not more than two years old." While drivers of privately owned and operated vehicles are not required to attend the training, officials stated that the training was available to such drivers if they wished to attend.

In 1979, the Safety Board recommended that each Governor of the 50 States, "Enact legislation to require that the driver of any motor vehicle with a seating capacity of more than 16 passengers, whether so employed or acting voluntarily, shall possess, in addition to a properly classified State drivers license, a certificate authenticating such driver's successful completion of a busdriver training course which conforms to Highway Safety Program Standard No. 17, Pupil Transportation Safety." (Recommendation No. H-79-31.) Safety Board records show that the former Governor of the State of Mississippi did not respond to the recommendation.

Safety Board investigators contacted officials at the Mississippi State Department of Education, Building and Transportation Division, about whether or not specific reference to the potential hazard from trucks hauling forest products or other objects with extensive rear overhang was included in either the schoolbus driver training or the drivers education curriculum. The response was that such a specific reference was not included in either program. However, the State Department of Education informed the Safety Board that the lessons learned in this accident prompted the inclusion of a specific reference to the accident and the potential danger from extensive rear overhang in the schoolbus driver training curriculum to be taught in future classes. The Safety Board is pleased to note that the State Department of Education has taken this prompt step to enhance pupil transportation safety.

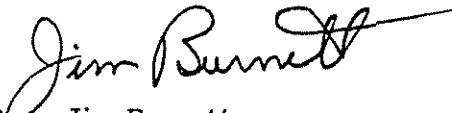
The Mississippi State law, which requires all public school busdrivers and drivers of privately owned buses under contract to public school districts to attend schoolbus driver training courses and to have a certificate not more than 2 years old, does not apply to any bus owned and operated by the S. L. & B. Academy, Inc. The function of S. L. & B. Academy, Inc., was to provide for the transportation of its members' children, who were students of Wayne Academy, to and from that school. The selection of a schoolbus as the mode of transportation was undoubtedly due to the large number of students being transported. The Safety Board has previously recommended that special training be required of drivers of all vehicles with a seating capacity of more than 16 persons. The safety related challenges and problems encountered in operating a schoolbus remain the same irrespective of the type of organization operating the schoolbus. While the circumstances of the accident are such that the Safety Board is unable to determine whether or not specialized training might have made a difference in preventing this accident, the Safety Board believes that the responsibilities of driving a schoolbus are such that special training is needed. The Safety Board further believes that it is inconsistent to require such training of public school busdrivers and drivers of privately owned buses under contract to public school districts while permitting the drivers of privately owned schoolbuses to operate those vehicles without such training. The Safety Board also believes that the potential hazard posed by logging trucks with extensive rear overhang, particularly when the logging trucks are turning, should be a part of the schoolbus driver training curriculum in areas where such hazards are likely to be encountered.

Therefore, as a result of its investigation of this accident, the National Transportation Safety Board recommended that the Governor of the State of Mississippi:

Introduce and support legislation to require that the driver of any motor vehicle with a seating capacity of more than 16 passengers, whether so employed or acting voluntarily, shall possess, in addition to a properly classified State driver's license, a certificate not more than 2 years old authenticating such driver's successful completion of a busdriver training course which conforms to Highway Safety Programs Standard No. 17, Pupil Transportation Safety. (Class II, Priority Action) (H-82-11)

Take steps to assure that reference to the potential hazard from trucks hauling forest products or other objects with extensive rear overhang, particularly the hazard from the swinging overhang during a turning maneuver, is included as part of the curriculum for all schoolbus driver training programs and driver's education programs throughout the State of Mississippi. (Class II, Priority Action) (H-82-12)

BURNETT, Chairman, GOLDMAN, Vice Chairman, and McADAMS and BURSLEY, Members, concurred in these recommendations.


By: Jim Burnett
Chairman

