

**NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

FOR RELEASE: 6:30 P.M., E.D.T., JULY 14, 1976

(202) 426-8787

ISSUED: July 14, 1976

Forwarded to:

Honorable Norbert T. Tiemann
Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
400 Seventh Street, S. W.
Washington, D. C. 20590

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

H-76-23 and H-76-24

On October 11, 1975, a charter bus owned and operated by the Metropolitan Coach Company was eastbound, in heavy rain, on Interstate 495 in Bethesda, Maryland. As the bus negotiated a curve to the right at 50 mph, the rear wheels of the bus lost traction and the rear of the bus began to slide from side to side. In its final slide to the right, the bus rotated counterclockwise 160° and contacted the guardrail. The bus flipped over, rotated 270° about its longitudinal axis, and landed on its left side in a roadside ravine. Of the 29 occupants, 26 were injured.

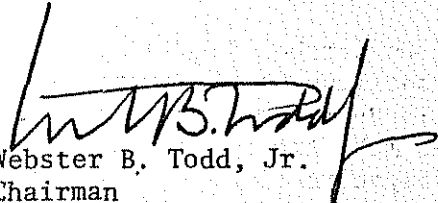
The road surface was tested by the Maryland State Highway Administration and found to be too slippery when wet. In a November 14, 1975, memorandum to the Division Administrator, the Regional Federal Highway Administrator analyzed the accident data at the accident site. The analysis indicated that the percentage of accidents which occurred at the site (post mileage 0.63) under wet pavement conditions has increased steadily since the road was constructed. In 1970, 33 percent of the accidents occurred on wet pavement. This rate increased to 80 percent in 1973 and dropped slightly to 75 percent in 1974.

The State of Maryland had available the accident data for this location and the location's high rate of wet-pavement accidents was recognized. Police, salvage operators, and rescue crews who responded to the accident commented on the frequency of accidents at the site. However, it appears that the State of Maryland had not recognized the significance of the accident data or had not acted upon it.

Therefore the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Federal Highway Administration:

Determine if the State of Maryland is in compliance with the requirements of Highway Safety Program Standard Number 9, "Identification and Surveillance of Accident Locations," and advise the Board accordingly. (H-76-23) (Class III, Longer Term Followup)

Establish minimum skid resistance values both for newly constructed and for existing pavement surfaces. Such minimum values must provide an acceptable margin of safety to accommodate all vehicle types under normal as well as predictable emergency maneuvering, and should consider the known varieties of commercial tire rubber compounds and the relationship of design speed and highway geometrics. After the minimum skid resistance values are determined, revise applicable highway design and pavement maintenance manuals accordingly. (H-76-24) (Class III, Longer Term Followup)


By: Webster B. Todd, Jr.
Chairman

TODD, Chairman, McADAMS, HOGUE, BURGESS, and HALEY, Members, concurred in the above recommendations.

THIS RECOMMENDATION IS TO BE RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC ON THE DATE SHOWN ABOVE. NO PUBLIC DISSEMINATION OF THE INFORMATION CONTAINED THEREIN SHOULD BE MADE BEFORE THAT DATE.