

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: December 23, 1975

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Forwarded to:

Dr. Robert A. Kaye  
Director  
Bureau of Motor Carrier Safety  
Federal Highway Administration  
Washington, D. C. 20590  
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SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

H-75-45

On May 13, 1975, a Rohr Industries' prototype bus was being road-tested near Phoenix, Arizona. The two occupants heard a noise from the engine compartment, felt a loss of engine power, and saw smoke coming from the rear engine compartment. They attempted to raise the hydraulically powered engine hood, but it would not open. The driver tried to extinguish the fire through the hood's access door, but he was not successful. The fire spread to the passenger compartment and destroyed the bus.

The engine fire extinguishment effort was frustrated by a basic design feature which is common to most, but not all, small fire extinguishers. The 2 1/2-pound dry chemical extinguisher used in the incident had a nozzle which was an integral part of the extinguisher. To direct the extinguishing medium at the flames, the entire extinguisher had to be manipulated.

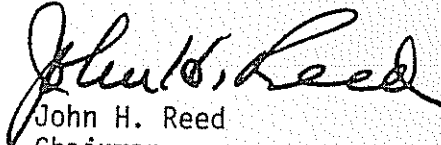
The space available to manipulate the extinguisher and the location of the initial fire made it impossible to direct the dry chemical at the fire. Had the extinguisher been equipped with a hose between the container and the nozzle, the nozzle could have been manipulated into a position which would have permitted direct application of the dry chemical on the fire.

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Bureau of Motor Carrier Safety:

Amend 49 CFR 393.95, "Emergency Equipment on All Power Units," to require that all extinguishers be equipped with a flexible hose between the

extinguishing medium's container and the outlet nozzle, of sufficient length to improve efficiency in fighting fires that are not directly accessible. (Recommendation H-75-45) (Class II, Priority Followup)

REED, Chairman, McADAMS, THAYER, BURGESS, and HALEY, Members, concurred in the above recommendation.

By:   
John H. Reed  
Chairman