

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

FOR RELEASE: 6:30 A.M., E.D.T., DECEMBER 23, 1975

(202) 426-8787

ISSUED: December 23, 1975

Forwarded to:

Honorable Robert E. Patricilli
Administrator
Urban Mass Transportation Administration
Washington, D. C. 20590

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)
H-75-39

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.

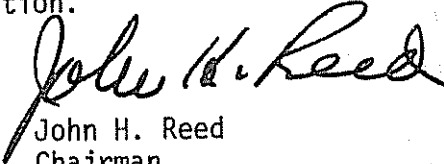
The Safety Board is concerned with the problem of occupant evacuation from burning mass transportation vehicles. Successful evacuation depends in a large measure on how long the environment in the passenger compartment can continue to support life. Experimental work in the aircraft industry suggests that poisonous gases, smoke, and oxygen depletion may cause incapacitation more quickly than does total flame involvement.

It is the Safety Board's understanding that, following the planned vehicle testing of the prototypes, they will not be sold or otherwise used. Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Urban Mass Transportation Administration:

Burn one or more of the prototype buses to establish the rate at which nonlife-supporting environments develop in the bus' passenger compartment. The recommended fire test should simulate actual traffic accident involvement. All combustible materials should be pretested to determine their ability to

meet Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 302,
"Flammability of Interior Materials." (Recommend-
ation H-75-39) (Class II, Priority Followup)

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


By: John H. Reed
Chairman

THIS RECOMMENDATION WILL BE RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC ON THE
ISSUE DATE SHOWN ABOVE. NO PUBLIC DISSEMINATION OF THIS DOCUMENT
SHOULD BE MADE PRIOR TO THAT DATE.