

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board on the basis of its review and analysis of the facts and circumstances of this accident, its investigation, and the conclusions set forth in Part III of this report, makes the following recommendations:

A. It is recommended that the Federal Highway Administration, working with the State Highway Departments, examine the need for and the feasibility of developing methods whereby hazardous driving conditions, such as fog, can be forcefully brought to the attention of drivers and, where appropriate, steps be taken to effect the closing of highways when conditions reach the point that zero visibility exists.

H-68-1

B. While the Board recognizes and endorses Amendment 75 of the Hazardous Material Regulations, Title 49, effective 12/31/67 and hence not applicable to this accident (requiring shippers to fully classify shipments by name and type of hazard in shipping documents), it recommends the following actions:

(a) That the Department undertake an augmented program to advise and instruct shippers and manufacturers of the requirements of the regulations concerning the proper packaging and for indicating on shipping documents the accurate identification and certification of dangerous articles offered for shipment; + →

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(b) That the Department pursue a vigorous enforcement program against persons who fail to comply with such regulations; and

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(c) That the Department and all other parties concerned (including representatives of all modes of transportation since this is an industrywide problem) continue their work in developing improved methods for more clearly setting forth on shipping documents the degree of hazard connected with the cargo being shipped so that all concerned with handling and transporting the cargo will be fully aware of the hazards involved; and that similar attention be given to improving the content of placards so that they will be readily intelligible to all concerned and especially to those who may, in case of an emergency, be called upon to undertake police and fire fighting responsibilities.

A-68-3

C. As indicated in this report, the FHWA investigation was in large measure enforcement oriented, and gave inadequate attention to the accident preventative lessons to be learned from such an investigation. Accident investigations conducted by State and local authorities are likewise enforcement oriented, and on that account often fail to develop data necessary to support accident prevention activities.

Accordingly, we recommend that the Federal Highway Administration review the adequacy of its accident investigation methods, techniques and procedures, and in so doing give consideration to the establishment of a small corps of investigators trained to investigate accidents with the prime purpose, not of enforcement, but as a pilot effort to develop accident investigation methods, techniques and procedures helpful in accident prevention programs.

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It should be emphasized that what is contemplated is a relatively small staff of people who would investigate accidents (such as the Joliet accident) on a highly selective basis, in depth, but with no idea of applying directly such accident prevention oriented techniques to the literally thousands of accidents that take place every week. In addition to obtaining desirable factual material in such investigations, this sort of highly limited Federal investigative effort could well have a very substantial fall-out from the experience and investigation improvements derived in developing standard accident prevention oriented approaches and passing them on to State and local enforcement officers to supplement the way they now conduct accident investigations.

This approach accepts the proposition that the basic responsibility for the overall investigative process in

motor vehicle accidents is, and should continue to be, that of State and local enforcement officers.

Another fall-out of a better oriented State and local accident investigation effort is related to the Federal-level programs already being initiated with the goal of improving capability at the State and local level to support and feed an accident investigation information reporting system. A clearer understanding of the purpose of such a reporting system (i.e., accident prevention) and knowledge of how better to look for and develop needed facts in specific accident investigations cannot help but make for a better reporting system.

In pursuit of the objectives described above, the Board suggests that consideration be given by the Federal Highway Administration to the utilization of the National Aircraft Accident Investigation School operated by the Board and the Federal Aviation Administration at Oklahoma City. This school is used by the National Transportation Safety Board and Federal Aviation Administration personnel, as well as by representatives of the armed services and to some extent foreign governments. It would not be too difficult to expand the curriculum of this school to provide basic training for accident investigators in all modes of transportation, as a facility that could provide instructional courses to Department of Transportation personnel who investigate surface transportation accidents, and to State and local

enforcement officers at their option.

The Board is of the view that a program such as is here outlined can be undertaken within existing Federal capabilities, and without any expansion of the Federal area of responsibility. It would continue, sustain, and improve the accident investigative activities of State and local enforcement officers; would not interfere with their functions; and would improve but not expand Federal accident investigation capability at the same time.

BY THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD:

/s/ JOSEPH J. O'CONNELL, JR.
Chairman

/s/ OSCAR M. LAUREL
Member

/s/ JOHN H. REED
Member

/s/ LOUIS M. THAYER
Member

/s/ FRANCIS H. McADAMS
Member