

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: May 9, 1978

Forwarded to:

Honorable Russell H. Mullen  
Acting Commissioner  
Department of Transportation  
State of New Jersey  
1035 Parkway Avenue  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

H-78-31 and 32

About 11:55 a.m., on July 6, 1977, a truck, with a gross weight of 52,000 pounds, struck an automobile at the intersection of U.S. Route 206 and County Road Route 616 near Vincentown, New Jersey. The truck-driver and six of the seven occupants of the automobile were killed.

The automobile was traveling west on Route 616 and the truck was southbound on Route 206 as the vehicle approached the intersection. The automobile driver's last 4 miles over Route 616 was on a high-speed, two-lane, secondary highway with good horizontal and vertical alignment. Traffic movement into the intersection was controlled by stop signs on Route 616. A "STOP AHEAD" sign, partially hidden by shrubs, is located 0.15 mile before the "STOP" sign at the intersection. A destination sign with the legend "VINCENTOWN MEDFORD HAMMONTON TRENTON" is 90 feet east of Route 206. No signing on Route 616 directs drivers to Route 206; this does not conform to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) which states, "Route marker assemblies shall be erected on all approaches to the intersection of numbered routes..." <sup>1/</sup> A person close to the intersection could, however, see a "SOUTH 206" reassurance marker on Route 206, 155 feet south of the intersection. The automobile driver was not familiar with the intersection, where she was to turn left onto Route 206, and it is possible that in seeking positive guidance she was distracted from her driving task and did not perceive the truck approaching on her right.

<sup>1/</sup> "Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways," U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), p. 97.

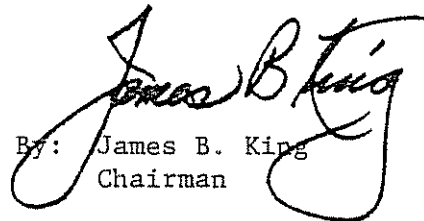
The New Jersey Department of Transportation (DOT) had determined in 1972 that a flashing beacon was warranted at the intersection. However, the beacon was not installed until after this accident and two previous fatal accidents. Flashing beacons have been effective in reducing right-angle collisions. However, this intersection should receive continued surveillance to determine the beacon's effectiveness at this location. Traffic counts taken by the New Jersey DOT at this location indicate that it satisfies the criteria for signal operation given in the MUTCD "Accident Experience Warrant." <sup>2/</sup> It is possible that a three-color signal will be necessary if the high accident rate continues.

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the New Jersey Department of Transportation:

Maintain surveillance of the intersection of U.S. Route 206 and County Road Route 616 through careful monitoring of traffic volumes and accidents. Use this information to determine the need for further corrective action to improve the safety of the intersection. (Class II, Priority Action) (H-78-31)

Install a Junction Assembly and Directional Marker Assembly on the approaches of County Road Route 616 that directs drivers to U.S. Route 206. (Class II, Priority Action) (H-78-32)

KING, Chairman, McADAMS, HOGUE, and DRIVER, Members, concurred in the above recommendations.

  
By: James B. King  
Chairman

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<sup>2/</sup> Ibid., p. 293.