



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Safety Recommendation

LDgH-531A

Date: June 5, 1989

In reply refer to: H-89-16

Mr. Wayne J. Smith
Executive Director
United Bus Owners of America
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Mr. Norman R. Sherlock
President
American Bus Association
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About 11:25 a.m. eastern standard time on November 29, 1988, a chartered intercity bus carrying a driver and 49 passengers en route to Atlantic City, New Jersey, from New York City, New York, was traveling southbound in the right "express" lane of the New Jersey Garden State Parkway near Tinton Falls, New Jersey. The bus, without signaling, gradually veered rightward off the travel lane, sideswiped a guardrail, skidded back onto the highway, and overturned onto its right side; the bus then slid about 220 feet diagonally across the two express lanes before coming to rest facing east with the rear of the bus across half of the left travel lane. There was no intrusion into the occupant compartment, no other vehicles were involved in the accident, and there was no fire. Forty-nine passengers (ages 60 to 85 years) and the 39-year-old busdriver sustained minor to severe injuries such as fractured ribs, lacerations, abrasions, and contusions.¹

The bus, a 1987 Motor Coach Industries, Inc., intercity-type coach with a diesel engine, automatic transmission, and 49 passenger seats was owned and operated by Leisure Time, Inc., of Mahwah, New Jersey. The side windows on the bus were made of abrasive-resistant, coated acrylic.

Twenty-seven passengers seated in the left side of the bus were thrown from their seats and fell on top of the 22 passengers seated on the right side of the bus during the overturn sequence. These 49 passengers became entangled on the right side of the bus while it slid diagonally across the highway before coming to rest. However, the passengers were contained inside the bus throughout the accident sequence.

¹For more detailed information, read Highway Accident/Incident Reports-- "Intercity-Type Buses Chartered for Service to Atlantic City, New Jersey" (NTSB/HAR-89/01/SUM).

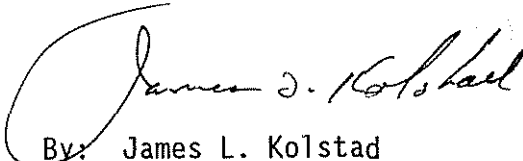
The Safety Board believes that if the bus had been equipped with the commonly used tempered safety glass in the side windows, the windows may have broken during the bus overturn, subjecting the passengers to violent contact with the road surface. Consequently, the acrylic windows may have prevented passengers from contacting the road surface and may have prevented them from sustaining more serious or even fatal injuries.

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the United Bus Owners of America and the American Bus Association:

Advise members of the safety benefits that accrued from use of the abrasion-resistant, coated acrylic windows in protecting the bus passengers when the bus overturned and slid on its right side in the November 29, 1988, accident in Tinton Falls, New Jersey. (Class II, Priority Action) (H-89-16)

Also, as a result of its investigation, the Safety Board issued Safety Recommendation H-89-15 to Leisure Time, Inc., H-89-17 to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, H-89-18 to the New Jersey Department of Transportation, and H-89-19 to the Federal Highway Administration.

KOLSTAD, Acting Chairman, and BURNETT, LAUBER, NALL, and DICKINSON, Members, concurred in this recommendation.


By: James L. Kolstad
Acting Chairman