



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, DC 20594

Safety Recommendation

Date: September 9, 2013

In reply refer to: H-13-35 and -36

Ms. Ronna Weber
Executive Director
National School Transportation Association
122 South Royal St.
Alexandria, VA 22314-3328

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant accidents in other modes of transportation—railroad, highway, marine, and pipeline. The NTSB determines the probable cause of the accidents and issues safety recommendations aimed at preventing future accidents. In addition, the NTSB carries out special studies concerning transportation safety and coordinates the resources of the federal government and other organizations to provide assistance to victims and their family members affected by major transportation disasters. We are providing the following information to urge the National School Transportation Association (NSTA) to take action on the safety recommendations being issued in this letter.

These recommendations address (1) developing guidelines to assist schools in training bus drivers, students, and parents on the importance and proper use of school bus seat belts; and (2) educating your members on the added benefit of lap and shoulder belts. On July 23, 2013, the NTSB adopted its report on the school bus and truck collision at the Burlington County Road 528–660 intersection near Chesterfield, New Jersey, on February 16, 2012, in which a school bus failed to yield to a Mack roll-off truck with a fully loaded dump container. The collision caused the bus to subsequently rotate nearly 180 degrees and strike a traffic beacon support pole. One elementary school passenger was killed.¹ Additional information about this crash and the resulting recommendations may be found in the investigation report, which can be accessed at our website, www.nts.gov, under report number NTSB/HAR-13/01.

¹ See *School Bus and Truck Collision at Intersection Near Chesterfield, New Jersey, February 16, 2012*, Highway Accident Report NTSB/HAR-13/01 (Washington, DC: National Transportation Safety Board, 2013).

As a result of this investigation, the NTSB issued 12 new recommendations—to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration; the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; the states of California, Florida, Louisiana, New Jersey, New York, and Texas; the National Truck Equipment Association; the School Bus Manufacturers Technical Council (SBMTC); and Herman's Trucking Inc.—including the following recommendations to NSTA, the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS), the National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT), the SBMTC, and the National Safety Council, School Transportation Section (H-13-35), and to NSTA, NASDPTS, and NAPT (H-13-36), respectively:

H-13-35

Develop guidelines and include them in the next update of the National School Transportation Specifications and Procedures to assist schools in training bus drivers, students, and parents on the importance and proper use of school bus seat belts, including manual lap belts, adjustable lap and shoulder belts, and flexible seating systems.

H-13-36

Provide your members with educational materials on lap and shoulder belts providing the highest level of protection for school bus passengers, and advise states or school districts to consider this added safety benefit when purchasing seat belt-equipped school buses.

These safety recommendations are derived from the NTSB's investigation and are consistent with the evidence we found and the analysis we performed. Chairman HERSMAN, Vice Chairman HART, and Members SUMWALT, ROSEKIND, and WEENER concurred in these recommendations.

The NTSB is vitally interested in these recommendations because they are designed to prevent accidents and save lives. We would appreciate receiving a response from you within 90 days detailing the actions you have taken or intend to take to implement them. When replying, please refer to the safety recommendations by number. We encourage you to submit your response electronically to correspondence@ntsb.gov. If it exceeds 10 megabytes, including attachments, please e-mail us at the same address for instructions. To avoid confusion, please do not submit both an electronic copy and a hard copy of the same response.

By:  **Deborah A.P. Hersman**
Acting Chairman