



## **ACCIDENT SUMMARY**

**Bridge Strike & Collapse  
Mt. Vernon, WA  
05/23/2013**

**HWY-13-MH-012  
(2 Pages)**

## Accident Summary

About 7:00 p.m. Pacific daylight time (PDT) on Thursday, May 23, 2013, a span of the Interstate 5 Bridge (Structure 4794A) at milepost 228.25 in Mount Vernon, Skagit County, Washington, collapsed and fell into the Skagit River, along with two passenger vehicles. The bridge, constructed in 1955, was classified as a non-load-path-redundant thru-truss design. The collapsed span, located on the north end of the bridge, was one of four spans supported by the thru-truss structure, and it consisted of two northbound and two southbound traffic lanes divided by a concrete barrier.

Immediately prior to the collapse, a 2010 Kenworth truck-tractor in combination with a 1997 Aspen flatbed trailer loaded with a casing shed (oversize load) was following a pilot vehicle and was traveling southbound on Interstate 5. According to witnesses, as both vehicles approached the bridge, the 2000 Kenworth Tractor pulling a 1996 Utility Semi-trailer was overtaking and passing the oversize load in the left lane.

The driver of the oversize load reported to investigators that he felt “crowded” by the passing combination vehicle so he moved his vehicle to the right. As the oversize load was being transported across the bridge, the top of the load collided with the portal and multiple sway braces on the far right side of the overhead thru-truss structure. The impacts caused significant damage to load-bearing members of the bridge’s superstructure, resulting in failure and subsequent collapse of the northernmost bridge span. During the post-collision investigation, the driver reported to investigators that he thought the height of the oversize load was 15 feet 9 inches. The lowest portion of the sway braces, as measured over the shoulder of the roadway, was determined to be 14 feet 8 inches. The lowest portion over the travel lanes was determined to be 15 feet 5 inches. According to the operator of the pilot vehicle, the clearance pole mounted on the front of her vehicle was set at 16 feet 2 inches.

Two passenger vehicles—a southbound 2010 Dodge Ram pickup truck towing a 2009 Jayco camper trailer and a northbound 2013 Subaru XV Crosstrek—were on the bridge span at the time of the collapse. The vehicles and the damaged span fell into the river. The three vehicle occupants were later rescued from the water. In addition to the span that collapsed, at least one adjacent span was found to have impact damage from the oversize load. The motorists on the collapsed span received injuries of varying degrees; no fatalities resulted from the collapse.

END OF SUMMARY