



Crash Summary

Biloxi, MS

HWY17MH010

(3 pages)



**NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
OFFICE OF HIGHWAY SAFETY
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

CRASH SUMMARY

A. CRASH INFORMATION

Location: Rail Crossing Main Street, Biloxi, Harrison County, Mississippi
Vehicle 1: 2016 Van Hool CX45 Motorcoach
Operator 1: Echo Transportation of Dallas, Texas
Vehicle 2: CSX Freight Train, consisting of 3 locomotives, 27 loaded cars, and 25 empty cars
Operator 2: CSX Railroad
Date: March 7, 2017
Time: Approximately 2:11 p.m. CST
NTSB #: **HWY17MH010**

B. CRASH SUMMARY

On Tuesday, March 7, 2017, about 2:11 p.m. Central standard time, a 2016 Van Hool motorcoach equipped with lap/shoulder belts, operated by Echo Transportation and occupied by a 60-year old driver and 49 passengers, ranging in age from 50 to 88 was traveling northbound on Main Street in Biloxi, Mississippi. The motorcoach approached and stopped in advance of a high vertical-profile highway-railroad grade crossing.

The grade crossing was marked with (1) a crossbuck sign, (2) warning lights, (3) a gate, and (4) a low ground clearance grade crossing warning sign with a low ground clearance plaque. The grade crossing warning system was not active at the time of the motorcoach approach. As the motorcoach driver attempted to drive the vehicle across the grade crossing, the frame of the motorcoach came in contact with the pavement and became stuck on the crossing. The driver attempted to move the motorcoach backward and forward to dislodge the vehicle, but was unsuccessful.

While the motorcoach was stuck on the crossing, an eastbound freight train operated by CSX Transportation was approaching the crossing at a recorded speed of 27 mph and with continuous sounding of its horn. At that time, the grade crossing warning system activated. Upon

becoming aware of the approaching train, the motorcoach driver opened the loading door and instructed the passengers to evacuate. Due to the limited mobility and age of the passengers, the evacuation was slow and the aisleway became congested; only 6 passengers were able to safely evacuate prior to impact.

After the engineer determined that the motorcoach appeared not to be clearing the tracks, he placed the train into emergency braking, about 502 feet west of the crossing. About 14 seconds later, the train struck the left side of the motorcoach at about 19 mph, pushing it about 259 feet down the tracks before coming to a stop, with the motorcoach still in contact with the lead locomotive. As a result of the crash, 4 motorcoach passengers died, the driver and 37 passengers sustained injuries, and 8 passengers were uninjured. The train crew was uninjured.