



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

**MOTOR CARRIER FACTORS GROUP CHAIRMAN'S
FACTUAL REPORT**

A. CRASH INFORMATION

Location: 4600 block of North State Route 25 in Rochester, Fulton County, Indiana
Vehicle 1: 2017 Toyota Tacoma pick-up truck
Operator 1: Private Operator
Pedestrian 1: 6-year old male
Pedestrian 2: 9-year old female
Pedestrian 3: 6-year old male
Pedestrian 4: 11-year old male
Date: October 30, 2018
Time: Approximately 7:12 a.m. EDT

NTSB #: HWY19MH003

B. MOTOR CARRIER FACTORS GROUP

Shawn Currie, Motor Carrier Factors Investigator, Group Chairman
NTSB Office of Highway Safety
490 L'Enfant Plaza East, S.W., Washington, DC 20594

C. CRASH SUMMARY

For a summary of the crash, refer to the *Crash Summary Report* in docket for this investigation.

D. DETAILS OF THE MOTOR CARRIER FACTORS INVESTIGATION

This investigative report addresses the operations of the school bus the pedestrians were crossing to in this crash, identified as Tippecanoe Valley School Corporation (TVSC) of Akron,

Indiana. This report documents the employment and driving history of the school bus driver, government oversight, and bus stop selection.

1. School Bus Operations

The carrier in this incident was Tippecanoe Valley School Corporation. The TVSC is a regional school district serving 1,788 students. Per the carrier's latest bus list, the carrier has 44 active school buses, including spare and special activity vehicles and employs 26 fulltime drivers.

2. Regulatory Oversight

The carrier is a school corporation. The trip resulting in the crash was an intrastate trip. As an intrastate trip involving the transportation of school children from school to home or home to school, the carrier was exempt from many of the federal regulations and falls primarily under the jurisdiction of the State of Indiana.

2.1. FMCSA Oversight

FMCSA has had no previous interaction with the TVSC.

2.2. State of Indiana Oversight

The state of Indiana has adopted the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations. Indiana conducts regular safety inspection of all school buses within the state. The school bus involved in this incident had a previous routine inspection and a post incident inspection completed by the Indiana State Police. The school bus was inspected after the incident and several defects were found. None of these defects to do with warning lights or other systems. For further information refer to the *Vehicle Factors Group Chairman's Factual report*.

The state of Indiana's Department of Education (DOE) requires a state mandated school bus driver basic training. This training consists of 2.5 days of classroom training, 8 - hours of driver training and 4 - hours of observed driving. After this is successfully completed the driver will receive a certificate or "yellow card". There is then a required annual safety class to maintain that certification.

Indiana also has addition requirements for school bus drivers. These requirements include a medical examination described further in section 3.1 and physical performance standards that are administered locally and are rated on a pass/fail system. The physical performance standards are: 1) The ability to exit the bus through the service and emergency exit doors, 2) The ability to climbing and descending the bus service door steps, 3) The ability to open and close the bus service door from a seated position, and 4) The ability to operate the hand controls and steering wheel.

3. School Bus Driver

The driver of school bus in this incident was a 57-year-old male who had been hired as a school bus driver with Tippecanoe Valley School Corporation on March of 2016.

3.1. School Bus Driver's Driver Qualification

The driver's qualification (DQ) file followed the requirements of 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 391.51.

Indiana requires all school bus drivers to obtain a physical examination certificate to be employed in the occupation¹. This certificate is similar to the USDOT required medical exam and certificate required for licensing purposes for commercial drivers. The table below compares the requirement for occupational and licensing requirements.

Comparison of Occupation and Licensing Medical Exam and Certificate	
Occupation (school bus driver) medical	Licensing (CDL) medical
Indiana General Assembly created in the 1920's	CDL came into existence in 1992
State required medical exam	Federally required for license to drive a vehicle with a capacity >15 passengers
Valid for up to 2 years	
Exam – Certified Medical Examiner	
Minimum depth perception (80%)	No depth perception requirement
Field-of-view minimum (150°)	Field-of-view minimum (140°)
Free from communicable disease spread by airborne or droplet means	No communicable disease requirement

¹ Indiana Code 20-27-8-4

According to the DQ file maintained by TVSC, the driver had a valid medical certificate on file that was valid for two years.² The DOT physical was performed by a medical professional that was on the national registry. The school bus driver's medical long form listed no medical issues.

3.2. School Bus Driver's Driving History

At the time of the crash the driver held a valid Indiana Class B Commercial Driver's License (CDL). The Indiana CDL was issued on March 4, 2016 and had an expiration date of December 2019. The School bus driver had an endorsement for Passengers and School Bus operation and had showed restrictions prohibiting operating of a Class A passenger vehicle and no manual transmission equipped vehicles on his CDL. According to the Motor Vehicle Report (MVR) report provided by the Indiana State Police, the school bus driver's driving record listed no prior convictions or crashes.

3.3. School Bus Driver's Employment History

According to the driver's application maintained in the DQ file, the school bus driver held a previous school bus driving job at the Greenfield Central School Corporation from March 2015 to January 2016. His application showed that he had retired from employment with a forklift company after 20 years in February of 2015 and was applying for the new school bus driving job to be closer to home.

3.4. School Bus Driver's Alcohol and Controlled Substance Testing

According to carrier documents, the school bus driver had at least two FMCSA regulated drug tests on file. The first regulated controlled substance test was classified as a pre-employment test conducted on February 29, 2016 for the TVSC. There was also documentation of an earlier pre-employment test on March 11, 2015 for the Greenfield Central School Corporation and a random controlled substance test conducted on October 20, 2015 also for Greenfield schools. According to the carrier files, the school bus driver was not subject to any random DOT alcohol tests. After the incident, the school bus driver was not subject to any testing by regulation. All the school bus driver's previous tests resulted in negative results.

3.5. School Bus Driver's Hours of Service (HOS)

The driver of the school bus was not subject to the hours of service regulations as his operation fell under the exemption for school buses operating in home to school or school to home.³

² Valid from February 9, 2017 to February 9, 2019

³ See 49CFR390.3(f)(1)

3.6. School Bus Driver Training

As mentioned previously in Section 2.2, the Indiana DOE requires all school bus drivers to have a basic level of training before becoming a certified bus driver. The driver of the school bus in this incident was certified by the Indiana DOE.⁴ The driver had also attended in-service training that was required for his continuing certification. An examination of records showed that he had attended and been tested⁵ on the following subject areas: bus stops, mirror usage, de-escalation techniques and school bus specifications. He was certified until December 31, 2019.

4. School Bus Vehicle Maintenance

The vehicle involved in the incident was a 2015 Thomas Built School Bus (Unit # 36) the bus was owned by the carrier. Maintenance records for the school bus were maintained by the carrier as required by regulation. For further information refer to the *Vehicle Group Chairman's Factual Report*.

5. School Bus Route

5.1. Route

The route for Bus #36 began at the school corporation's bus garage located behind the high school in Akron, Indiana. The bus then continued traveling on rural farm roads until it reached Route 25 where it continued in a northern direction making several stops. The bus stop where the crash occurred was number stop #5.

5.2. Route Planning

Investigation determined the bus routes were historical and passed from driver to driver. The previous driver of Bus #36 stated she had inherited the route without changes from the driver before her. The TVSC stated that the drivers were responsible for planning the routes and that the ultimate responsibility for the route rests with the Transportation Director. Drivers provided the Transportation Director route maps with the stops at the beginning of the school year. TVSC was not able to provide a date when route #36 was originally submitted or by who.

5.3. Route Risk Assessment Training

TVSC stated that the drivers were provided training on route safety by Indiana DOE. Indiana DOE provided investigators with the course syllabus for the Transportation 101 training provided to state to new Transportation Directors. Indiana DOE also provided investigators with the annual in-service and basic training provided to bus drivers. The training covered topics such as safely servicing bus routes, placement of vehicles, and student management. No training was provided to the bus drivers on the topics of school bus route planning, risk assessment or the need to conduct periodic route re-evaluations.

⁴ See Motor Carrier Attachment – Driver's Yellow Card

⁵ See Motor Carrier Attachment – Driver's knowledge test

Investigators interviewed the Superintendent/Transportation Director for the TVSC⁶. The transportation director stated he began his duties in 2014. Shortly after, the transportation director attended the IDOE Transportation Conference. The transportation director had not attended the “Transportation 101” course and had attended a course on “bus driver training”. The transportation director had not had any formal route risk assessment training.

A query to the Indiana Department of Education revealed the transportation director had attended a three-day “pre-service” course from December 3rd - 5th, 2014. A review of that course’s PowerPoint presentation showed several slides about making school bus stops, safe loading and unloading, and statistical data on school bus crashes. No information was presented on risk assessment or student pickup/drop off site evaluation. Indiana Department of Education stated that approximately 1.5% of all school districts/charter and non-public schools/head starts requested the Transportation 101 course offered by the state,

Since the crash, the TVSC is a participant in the Safety Review Committee that includes Kosciuszko County school district, Caston County and Fulton County school districts, various law enforcement and governmental agencies from the involved counties.. This committee has had all the school bus drivers present their routes for evaluation and made recommendations on the safety of the routes. There is no formal written charter or tasking for this committee.

E. DOCKET MATERIAL

The following attachments and photographs are included in the docket for this investigation:

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Motor Carrier Attachment – TVSC Transportation Director interview transcript

Motor Carrier Attachment – Driver’s yellow card

Motor Carrier Attachment - Driver knowledge testing

Motor Carrier Attachment - DOE training slides

END OF REPORT

Shawn Currie

Highway Accident Investigator

⁶ Motor Carrier Attachment – TVSC Transportation Director interview transcript