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Preliminary Report HWY23FH013

This information is preliminary and subject to change.

Roadway Departure and Crash with Parked Vehicles

Millersburg, Oregon
May 18, 2023

On Thursday, May 18, 2023, about 2:45 p.m. Pacific daylight time, a 2018 Freightliner truck-tractor in combination with a 2014 Utility soft-sided semitrailer, operated by Waypoint Logistics, was traveling northbound on Interstate 5 (I-5) north of Millersburg, Marion County, Oregon. A 2001 Ford Econoline van towing a small utility trailer, operated by J. Ruiz Farm Labor Contractors, was parked on the 25-foot-wide right shoulder north of the highway exit ramp leading to the North Santiam rest area (see figure 1). A 2023 Freightliner Cascadia truck-tractor in combination with a 2023 Utility enclosed semitrailer, operated by C.R. England, was also parked on the right northbound shoulder of I-5 in front of the van. The 2018 Freightliner departed the highway travel lanes while approaching the location of the stopped vehicles and collided with the rear of the van and its trailer. The van was subsequently pushed forward into the rear of the 2023 combination vehicle.

As a result of the crash, seven van occupants were fatally injured, three were seriously injured, and one sustained minor injuries. The drivers of the combination vehicles were not injured.

At the crash location, I-5 comprises two travel lanes in each direction with the north and southbound lanes separated by an earthen median and a median guardrail barrier. The speed limit is 65 mph with a reduced speed limit of 60 mph for trucks. At the site of the crash, the highway was straight and level. At the time of the crash, the weather was clear, and the roadway surface was dry.



Figure 1. Aerial view of I-5 at the North Santiam rest area showing the approximate location of the 2023 Freightliner and the 2001 Ford van at impact. (Source: Google Earth; annotations by the NTSB)

Parties to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigation include:

- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Oregon and Indiana Divisions
- US Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division
- Oregon State Police
- Freightliner, a Division of Daimler Truck, North America

All aspects of the crash remain under investigation while the NTSB determines the probable cause, with the intent of issuing safety recommendations to prevent similar events.