Issued: 9/25/2024 Preliminary Report HWY24MH013

This information is preliminary and subject to change.

Rear-End Collision and Subsequent Multivehicle Collisions near Toll Plaza on Interstate 80

Swanton, Ohio
August 15, 2024

On Thursday, August 15, 2024, about 5:34 a.m. eastern daylight time, a 2015 Toyota Highlander sport utility vehicle (SUV), occupied by a driver and three passengers, was traveling east on Interstate 80 (I-80), approaching the Swanton Township Toll Plaza near mile post 49. The eastbound lanes leading up to the toll facility consist of two high-speed toll lanes with a 70-mph speed limit and two lanes designated for toll booth access. The SUV was occupying the right through-lane designated for high-speed toll operations. The high-speed toll lanes and lanes designated for toll booth access are separated by a painted gore area, which transitions to a concrete barrier wall on approach to the toll plaza. As the SUV reached the beginning of the barrier wall, the driver slowed to enter the lanes to the toll booth access and was struck from the rear by a 2019 Mack Anthem truck-tractor in combination with a 2009 Great Dane van-style semitrailer (Mack combination vehicle). After impact, the SUV veered right and came to rest in a culvert adjacent to the right eastbound shoulder (figure 1). The Mack combination vehicle also veered right and struck the concrete barrier wall. The truck-tractor then overturned, causing the release of its hazardous-materials cargo. As a result of the crash, two passengers in the SUV were fatally injured, the driver and the other passenger were seriously injured, and the driver of the Mack combination vehicle was seriously injured. Although several workers on the turnpike and first responders may have been exposed to the hazardous materials in the cargo release, no related injuries were reported. Following this collision, a traffic queue began to form in the eastbound lanes of I-80 leading up to the crash site.

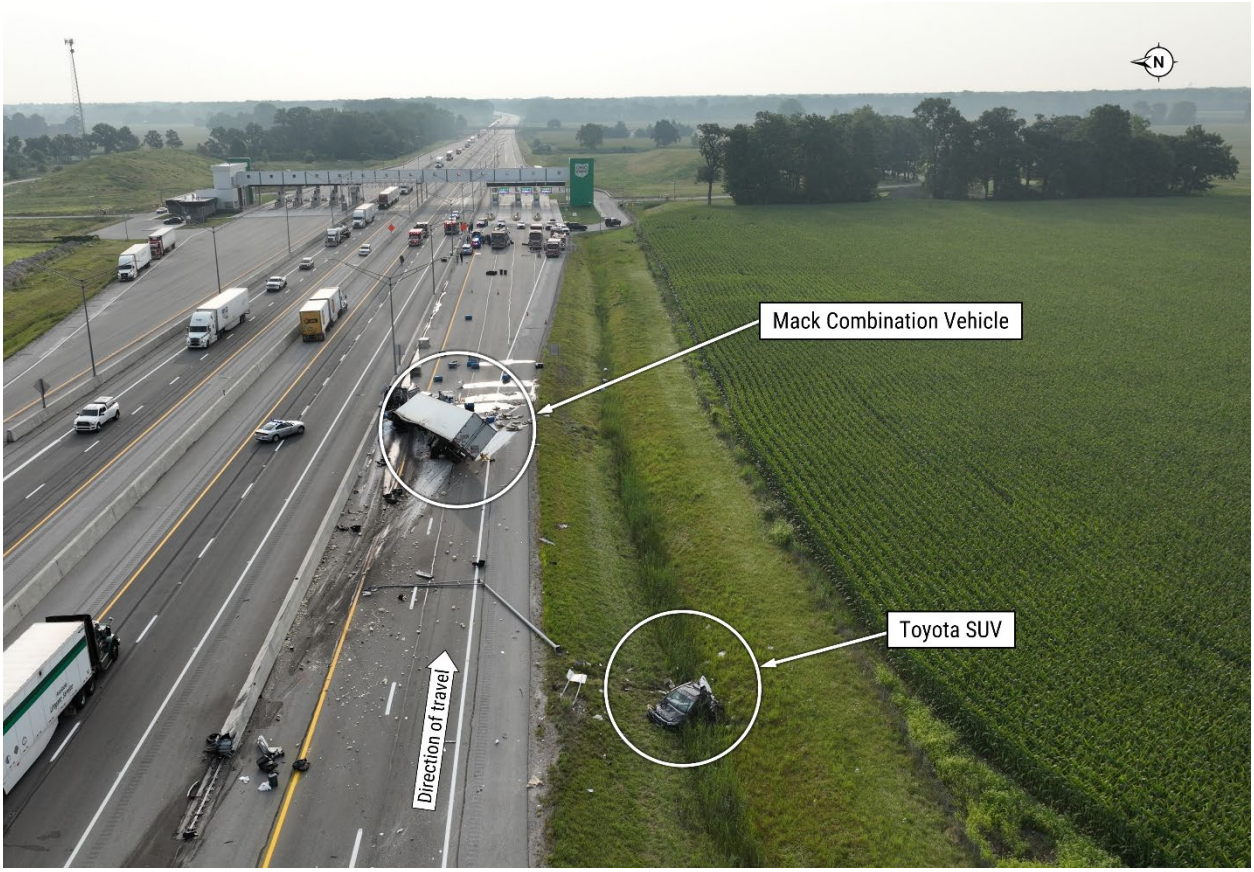

Figure 1. Final rest positions of the Mack combination vehicle and Toyota SUV. (Source: Ohio State Highway Patrol; annotations by NTSB)

About 20 minutes after this collision, at 5:54 a.m., another crash involving five commercial motor vehicles (CMV) and one passenger car occurred in the traffic queue in the left lane of the eastbound lanes of I-80 near mile post 48, west of the initial crash. The initial striking vehicle in the second crash involved a 2022 Volvo 760 Series truck-tractor in combination with a 2022 Wabash semitrailer (2022 Volvo combination vehicle). Four of the CMVs involved sustained varying levels of damage while a postcrash fire destroyed the 2022 Volvo combination unit and the passenger car. As a result of the crash and fire, the driver of the 2022 Volvo combination vehicle was fatally injured and four occupants of the other four CMVs and passenger car sustained injuries of various degree. After the two crashes in the eastbound lanes near the toll plaza, a queue began to form in the westbound lanes of I-80 near mile post 51. In this area, westbound I-80 consists of two lanes with a 70-mph speed limit. At 6:24 a.m., a westbound 2024 Volvo VNL truck-tractor in combination with a van-style semitrailer (2024 Volvo combination vehicle) did not stop for slowing traffic in the queue and struck the rear of a pickup truck towing a trailer and two passenger cars. One of the passenger cars then struck another CMV. This crash in the

westbound lanes involved five vehicles and resulted in one fatality and seven additional injuries of varying degree.

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

- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
- Ohio State Highway Patrol
- Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission
- Public Utilities Commission of Ohio

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.