



SURVIVAL FACTORS GROUP

Attachment 1 First Responder, Witness, and Hospitalized Bus Passenger Interviews

Gray Summit, MO.

HWY-10-MH-018
(08 Pages)

1. INTERVIEWS

1.1 First Responder Interviews

Chief James Casey

Chief of the Boles Fire District and initial Incident Commander

Interviewed Friday August 6, 2010 at MSHP Barracks

According to the Chief, he got a call from dispatch saying there was a bus versus truck-tractor accident at milepost 251. When we arrived there was a Franklin County Sherriff's Deputy and Lieutenant McClelland of the Meramec Ambulance District in his staff car, already on-scene in the median shoulder. The Chief said he pulled his SUV to the westbound shoulder and went to talk to the Lt. McClelland and found out what the situation was and also that he had already called in an MCI Level 1. The Chief said his SUV was used as the Command Post (CP) during the incident.

According to the Chief, as three additional Officers arrived he assigned one to Rescue, another to the CP, and the third acted as both the Staging and Public Information Officer (PIO). The Chief said when his departments Rescue unit 512 arrived he assigned them to extricate the trapped girl in the second to last seat and the fatality in the last seat. The Chief said that they cut several roof pillars and removed the back wall adjacent to the emergency exit door and back seat floor post in order to remove them and extricate the deceased passenger. In addition, the extrication team used the hydraulic rams to separate the seats in the second to last row in order to remove another trapped passenger. The Chief said he also requested that Pacific Fire District send their Rescue truck. At some point early in the incident, the Chief said he got together with the MSHP and discussed the best way to remove the school bus off the truck-tractor and request the proper type of wreckers to do the job.

The Chief said he redirected the arriving EMS units to go to the frontage road parallel to the accident scene to help keep down congestion and make it easy for them to get out to the hospitals. He also said he got on the radio and instructed all the responding units to come to the scene by driving west down the eastbound lanes since the eastbound lanes were shut down. When his departments rescue squad arrived he said he assigned them to the elevated bus in order to access the number of patients and their injuries. After they did that he said he re-assigned them to rescue and extrication. When the engine pumper unit arrived he assigned them to lay down a foam blanket on the spilled gas to suppress the vapors and prevent a fire. He said as EMS units started arriving he had them set-up a triage station along the frontage road were all the kids were sitting.

According to the Chief, when the Union Fire District pumper arrived he assigned them to assist in the rescue and extrication. He said when his District's pumper unit arrived he assigned them to set up a landing zone for the helicopter but due to the extended time of arrival for the helicopter they cancelled it. He said he then moved them to the CP to relieve others due to the high temperatures.

Later the Chief said he requested his District's auxiliary van respond to the scene in order to get tents, water, and a small air-conditioned restroom on-scene.

Lieutenant James McClelland
Meramec Ambulance District
Interviewed August 6, 2010

According to the Lt., he got toned out at 10:15 am and arrived first on-scene at 10:18 am just ahead of the Boles Fire District. He said he saw the school bus on top of the truck-tractor and knew the accident was worse than initially reported. He said the 2nd bus with all the boys in it had already evacuated out the rear emergency door and saw the girls were evacuating out the left rear emergency exit window of the bus with two passerby's helping them to the ground. He said he immediately called in an MCI Level 1 that gave him no less than 5 ambulances enroute. He said he initially asked for a helicopter to be on standby but after hearing that the ETA was 24 minutes he cancelled them.

The Lt. said he directed all the bus occupants to go towards the service road where he was going to have triage set up. He also said he told dispatch to send all responding ambulances to the south service road for staging in order to lessen the congestion on the Interstate and make it easy for them to transport the injured. The Lt. said that the IC requested a coach bus from Mid-American Coach in order to transport the walking wounded to the hospital to be evaluated.

According to the Lt. the first person to be transported from the scene was the extricated patient at 10:39 am and the second person transported was the truck-tractor driver.

Mark Thomas
Deputy/EMT with the Franklin County Sherriff's Department
Telephonic Interview Wednesday August 11, 2010

According to Deputy Thomas, he overheard the call on the scanner and knew if the call was legitimate that they would need help at the scene. The deputy also said he knew that if the accident was as bad as he was hearing over the scanner that the Interstate would be closed so went to the intersection of I-44 and Hwy 100 and saw that it was already closed so he proceeded westbound on the eastbound lanes of the interstate to the accident scene.

The deputy said that as he pulled up he already saw an ambulance on-scene and the Boles rescue unit pulling up ahead of him. He said he got out surveyed the scene and saw the kids still evacuating from the school bus, the truck driver rolling on the ground, and the pick-up truck driver partially hanging out of his vehicle so he grabbed a sheet and covered him up. He said he saw that someone was tending to the truck driver so he proceeded to help the rescue unit start up the generator for the rescue equipment used for extrication. Afterwards he went to the triage area and helped out assessing the kids.

Kate Kelley
Paramedic Meramec Ambulance District
Telephonic Interview Wednesday August 11, 2010

According to the paramedic, when they arrived they were the second ambulance on-scene. The Lt. told them about the 1 entrapped and 1 deceased passenger still in the bus and asked her to assess the trapped passenger. She said when she climbed in the bus she saw a Boles firefighter/EMT already in trying to extricate the passenger using the Spreaders.

The paramedic said the passenger was trapped from the waist down between two seatbacks. She estimated that she was inside about 5-6 minutes prior to the passenger being freed. The paramedic said that that she was concerned that the passenger would suffer from compartment syndrome after being freed and would quickly deteriorate so she kept a close watch of her vital signs.

After being released, the paramedic said that the passenger's condition did slightly deteriorate so they quickly handed her out through the rear right emergency window to two firefighters on the ground where she was placed on a backboard and carried to an ambulance. She said she then requested the bus driver who was still inside the bus to exit out the left rear emergency window and be assessed by paramedics.

According to the paramedic she then got out through the left rear emergency window and walked around to continue help package up the passenger they just removed.

Eric Stanley
Captain/firefighter with the Boles Fire District
Telephonic interview Monday August 23, 2010

According to Captain Stanley, upon receiving the call, he and his partner proceeded to the scene. He said that per instructions from on-scene personnel, they drove westbound down the eastbound lanes of I-44.

Upon their arrival on-scene, the Capt. said he approached the IC and asked him what he wanted them to do. The IC told the Capt. that he needed to assess the inside of the girls' bus. According to the Capt when he entered the bus carrying the hydraulic hoses, he saw the elderly female bus driver, a male civilian, and the entrapped girl. He said after the male civilian explained what all he did on the bus he requested the bus driver and the male civilian to exit the bus. He said the male civilian exited but the bus driver refused to leave until the girl was freed.

According to the Capt. after assessing the trapped girl and seeing that her feet were free but her torso was pinned between the two seatbacks, he observed the deceased girl behind her and told the paramedic supervisor outside the bus what he had inside. He said he then asked his partner outside for both the small and large hydraulic rams. He said at some point a paramedic joined him inside and was assessing the entrapped girl as he prepared to extricate her. He said he was concerned about the girl developing "Crush Syndrome" after he freed her up.

The Capt. said he initially used the smaller ram between the two seatbacks that were pinning the girl in and when that wasn't enough room to remove her he got the larger ram and spread the seatbacks farther apart and then they were able to remove her. He said they had to lift her out and then they handed her down out through the passenger side emergency window and had her boarded when on the ground.

The Capt. said he then helped the elderly bus driver out through the driver side emergency exit window. He said before he exited, he walked through the bus again to make sure everyone was out.

Huntley Hoemann
Trooper with the Missouri State Highway Patrol
Telephonic Interview Monday August 9, 2010

According to the Trooper, he responded to the call from St. Clair and he was familiar with the location because there had been two accidents there earlier in the week. He said as he proceeded to the location he heard that the Interstate had closed down so he took an alternate route coming in east of the accident scene and then up driving westbound to the scene in the eastbound lanes.

As he pulled up to the scene he saw the truck-tractor with the school bus on top of it. When he arrived he said he saw that the Boles fire district and a Franklin County Sherriff's Deputy were already on-scene. According to trooper Hoemann, he didn't realize how severe the accident was until he walked up to the vehicles and saw the pick-up truck under the school bus and a sheet covering the deceased driver hanging partially outside the vehicle. He said he also saw all the girls getting out of the bus and going to the staging area by the service road.

Trooper Hoemann stated that he started gathering information and also ordered wreckers to the scene. He said he made contact with the driver of the lead school bus and was able to get some information from her but couldn't get much because she seemed to be in-shock. He said afterwards he went and continued gathering information for his accident report.

1.2 Eyewitness and Helper Interviews

Ty Mayberry
Civilian helper
Interviewed 8/20/10

According to Mr. Mayberry, he and his wife were driving eastbound in the right lane behind a truck-tractor with trailer that was behind the two school buses when the truck in front of him stopped. He said he saw the charter bus pull onto the shoulder. He said he then witnessed debris flying towards the median ahead of him and cars to his left steering into the median. He said he pulled to the right shoulder behind the charter bus and said as he did so his wife burst out crying having seen the stopped pile-up of the school buses ahead.

Mr. Mayberry said he got out and ran to the first bus with the girls in it. He said that there were already 2 guys under the rear emergency window preparing to help the girls out the window. He said he jumped up and grabbed the window sill and pulled himself up into the bus. He said the girls were all piled around the window and he had them back away so he could enter. Upon entering, Mr. Mayberry said he first noticed the overwhelming smell of gasoline.

According to Mr. Mayberry, once inside, the first thing he did was slide down the window in the row directly in front of the emergency window aisle and had a girl, that appeared to be slightly older and seemed relatively calm, reach out and hold the emergency window open so the other girls could crawl out. He said the guys on the ground helped the girls down as they crawled out the window.

Mr. Mayberry said that he then went to the back of the bus and saw a girl, he later found out named Emily, trapped between two seatbacks and another girl named Danie on the floor. He said he pulled Danie up off the floor and helped her into a seat 3-4 rows ahead. He said he then went back to Emily and checked her out to see if she was bleeding because she was turning white. After seeing she wasn't bleeding he figured she was in shock so he started talking to her. While doing so, Mr. Mayberry noticed the girl in the very back row that was crushed and checked several times for a pulse but found none. He said he continued talking to Emily and didn't let any of the other girls, still on the bus; know about the deceased girl in the back row.

According to Mr. Mayberry, when most all the girls were off the bus he carried Danie to the emergency window and put her through head first and when the guys on the ground had her, he lifted her legs out and they lowered her down to the ground.

Mr. Mayberry said that when the firemen came in through the same emergency window carrying their hydraulic hoses he exited the bus out that same emergency window.

When asked about other emergency exit windows, Mr. Mayberry said he wasn't aware of any other windows on the bus and was certain everyone went out the same exit window. Mr. Mayberry also said that the metal tab on the base of the exit window that the latch handle connects too, needs to be removed. He said that almost every girl exiting out that window got some piece of clothing snagged on the metal tab and it delayed the evacuation.

**Lt. Colonel Kevin Warren
Maryland National Guard
Telephonic Interview October 19, 2010**

According to Lt. Col. Warren, he was driving to the St. Louis airport after finishing his training when he observed the collision between the Volvo bobtail tractor and the GMC pick-up truck.

According to Lt. Col. Warren, he was driving in the left lane traveling about 50 mph approaching the back of the GMC pick-up truck when he happened to notice the pick-up truck driver's head disappear like the driver was bending down to get something or leaning way over to the right reaching for something. He said he then noticed the bobtail tractor come to a stop

and saw the GMC pick-up impact the back of the tractor. He said debris flew out into his lane and he swerved to the left to avoid it. Lt. Col. Warren said as he drove past the collision comprehending what he just saw, he looked back in his right outside rearview mirror and saw the school bus hit the pick-up truck and climb up the back of the bobtail tractor.

According to Lt. Col. Warren, he didn't realize there was another school bus involved until he was at the airport and saw on the television what all had transpired. When asked, the Lt. Col. said he did not see any brake lights from the GMC pick-up prior to the collision with the bobtail tractor.

1.3 School Bus Passenger Interviews

Emily Perona

Age 16

Height 5'6" Weight 110 lbs.

Interviewed 8/9/2010 at Barnes –Jewish Hospital

According to Ms. Perona, she was seated in the eleventh row on the right side next to the window and said that Miranda Hamm was seated next to her. She also said that Jessica Brinker and Daniele Klein were sitting behind her.

According to Ms. Perona, she was talking just prior to the accident and all the sudden she felt this feeling that they were going upwards and all the girls started screaming. Then she felt the impact from the behind. The next thing she remembered is hearing people saying Emily is trapped. She said someone tried pulling the seats apart but couldn't. Then she remembered some random guy talking to her and telling her that everything will be okay, you're alive. Then she said she started to feel faint and passed out. The next thing she remembers is waking up in the ambulance.

When asked about the bus driver, Ms. Perona stated that the kids call her "Crazy Katherine" because she doesn't always seem like a safe driver. When asked for an example she said she drives slowly at night.

When asked if she ever having any evacuation training, she replied, "No".

According to Ms. Perona, she sustained a fractured pelvis in 3 spots and needed screws and plates to repair it.

Danielle Klein

Age 14

Height 5'2" Weight 115 lbs.

Interviewed 8/9/2010 at Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital

According to Ms. Klein, she was seated in the last row on the right side next in the aisle seat and said that Jessica Brinker was seated next to her. She also said that Emily Perona and Miranda Ham were sitting in front of her.

According to Ms. Klein, she said she was talking with Jess Brinker when she felt the bus swerve but thought they were hitting rumble strips on the shoulder but it kept getting worse and didn't stop. Then she said there was a big bang.

She said that when they stopped, Jess was pushing her and was saying, "Get out, Get out" and pushed her onto the floor and that was all she remembered.

When asked about the bus driver, Ms. Klein said that she seemed like a safe driver but a lot of the kids called her "Crazy Katherine" because she doesn't always seem like a safe driver.

When asked if she ever having any evacuation training, she said yes every year in elementary school. She also said that she was familiar with the emergency exits and how they worked.

According to Ms. Klein, she sustained a skull fracture and 2 vertebrae fractures at T11-12, plus all sorts of bruises and minor cuts.