



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

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

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**A. CRASH INFORMATION**

Location: 14000 block US 441, Delray Beach, Palm Beach County, Florida  
Vehicle 1: 2019 International truck-tractor in combination with a 2008 Vanguard semi-trailer  
Operator 1: FirstFleet, Inc., Murfreesboro, Tennessee  
Vehicle 2: 2018 Tesla Model 3  
Operator 2: Private Operator  
Date: March 1, 2019  
Time: Approximately 6:17 a.m. (local time)  
NTSB #: **HWY19FH008**

**B. MOTOR CARRIER GROUP**

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**C. CRASH SUMMARY**

For a summary of the crash, refer to the Crash Summary Report, which can be found in the docket for this investigation.

**D. DETAILS OF THE HUMAN PERFORMANCE INVESTIGATION**

This investigative report addresses the motor carrier operations of FirstFleet, the owner of the truck tractor-semitrailer involved in this crash.

## **1. Motor Carrier Operations – FirstFleet, Inc.**

FirstFleet is a privately owned company that began in 1986. The carrier’s principal place of business is in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) Motor Carrier Management Information System (MCMIS), the carrier was issued USDOT number 313891 and MC number 193678.<sup>1</sup> FirstFleet is registered as a “For-Hire” interstate motor carrier that employs 2,940 drivers and owns 2,847 trucks and close to 10,000 trailers. The carrier operated 218,916,209 miles in 2018. Its website indicated that the company operates in 29 states with service to all 48 contiguous states, Canada and Mexico. The carrier primarily transports general freight, construction, beverages, refrigerated products, and paper products. The company is broken down by region and has 105 locations throughout the continental United States. Its business model varies depending on its contract with its customers.

### **1.1. FMCSA Oversight**

FirstFleet was not part of the New Entrant Program. The company’s most recent compliance review occurred in July 2008, and it received a “Satisfactory” rating from the FMCSA with no critical or acute violations found.<sup>2</sup> FirstFleet’s current Safety Measurement System profile indicates that it does not have any acute or critical violations in any of the seven Behavior Analysis & Safety Improvement Categories (BASICS) categories.<sup>3</sup> Its vehicle out of service rate is 15.4%, compared to the national average of 20.7%; and its driver out of service rate is 0.8%, compared to the national average of 5.5%.

### **1.2. Hiring Practices**

On March 5, 2019, NTSB investigators interviewed the vice president and the director of risk management for FirstFleet.<sup>4</sup> The meeting took place in Tampa Bay, Florida. According to FirstFleet representatives, the company recruits drivers primarily using Tenstreet and also receives applications through its own website, [www.firstfleet.com](http://www.firstfleet.com).<sup>5</sup> The carrier uses HireRight to conduct

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<sup>1</sup> Motor Carrier Attachment – FirstFleet MCMIS Report.

<sup>2</sup> Motor Carrier Attachment – FirstFleet SAFER Report.

<sup>3</sup> The BASICS categories include: unsafe driving, crashes, hours of service compliance, vehicle maintenance, controlled substances and alcohol, driver fitness, and hazardous materials compliance.

<sup>4</sup> Motor Carrier Attachment – Interview with FirstFleet Representatives.

<sup>5</sup> Tenstreet supplies services and software applications to hire, train, and retain commercial drivers. See <https://www.tenstreet.com/solutions/recruiting/>

background checks and prior employer checks on its applicants. Its minimum qualifications standards include the following requirements:<sup>6</sup>

- Must possess a Class A commercial driver's license (CDL) from the state of residence
- Must have at least 1-year tractor/trailer experience
- Must have no chargeable Department of Transportation (DOT) reportable accidents within the past three years
- No driving under the influence (DUI) or driving while intoxicated (DWI), drug or alcohol related convictions within past 5 years
- No careless or reckless driving convictions within past 5 years

According to FirstFleet representatives, in addition to the above qualifications, drivers must live an hour or less from their terminal. New recruits must go through on-boarding, where they are taught about the company, the routes, and the electronic logging device. FirstFleet also uses third-party software to create online training for its drivers to supplement onsite training.<sup>7</sup> All drivers are given a driver's handbook with all the company's policies on such topics as cell phone usage restrictions, hours of service rules, accident reporting, and discipline.

### **1.3. Safety Culture**

According to FirstFleet representatives, FirstFleet has a head safety manager and regional safety managers. Each year, drivers must attend two mandatory safety meetings. These safety meetings last about 2 hours per driver. In addition, the company brings in a driver trainer to three of its locations each year to discuss safe driving skills with local drivers. FirstFleet has a safety program that rewards drivers quarterly with a \$125 bonus if they avoid having an accident. There is also a tiered reward program for drivers who avoid accidents for 500,000 miles or more.

The company has a progressive discipline policy, which states that, "the level of discipline will be appropriate for the level of infraction -- a first offense may call for a verbal warning; a next offense may be followed by a written warning; another offense may lead to a suspension; and, still another offense may then lead to termination of employment. Depending on the nature and severity of

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<sup>6</sup> Motor Carrier Attachment – FirstFleet Hiring Requirements.

<sup>7</sup> Training software is accessed through the ProProfs website.

the problem, one or more steps in the process may be skipped.” The employee handbook lists specific offenses that may warrant progressive discipline and offenses that may result in immediate termination.<sup>8</sup>

#### **1.4. Driver Fitness and Drug and Alcohol Testing**

In each region, FirstFleet contracts with health centers to conduct DOT fitness examinations on its drivers. The company pays for its driver’s examinations, which incentivizes its drivers to use these contracted health centers. In addition, for the past 10 years, FirstFleet has worked with its medical insurance provider to waive the deductible for the nonsurgical diagnosis and treatment of sleep apnea. Drivers are thereby able to take part in a sleep study and obtain a continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) device without having to pay a deductible.<sup>9</sup>

The carrier has an established drug and alcohol testing program. Specimens are collected at Quest Diagnostic locations, and DSI Medical acts as the Consortium/Third-Party Administrators (C/TPAs) that manages the DOT drug and alcohol testing program. Medical review officers from MainLine Drug Testing Services review the drug test results. FirstFleet requires drivers to submit to a drug test after all crashes, even those that do not meet the DOT threshold.<sup>10</sup><sup>11</sup> Based on the records supplied by FirstFleet, the truck driver was tested four times – one pre-employment and three post-crash tests. All four tests results were negative for common drugs of abuse.<sup>12</sup> See the *Human Performance Factual* for additional information on the driver’s crash history.

#### **1.5. Driver Hours of Service**

All FirstFleet trucks are equipped with an automatic onboard recording device (AOBRD) that logs driver hours and alerts drivers when they may exceed or have exceeded DOT hours of service thresholds. If hours are exceeded, an alert is sent to the safety manager as well as the regional safety manager. Based on the electronic logs obtained from First Fleet, the International

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<sup>8</sup> Motor Carrier Attachment – FirstFleet Progressive Discipline Policy.

<sup>9</sup> This is true for all plans except the high-deductible plan.

<sup>10</sup> Motor Carrier Attachment – FirstFleet Post-Crash Drug Testing Policy.

<sup>11</sup> See 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 382.

<sup>12</sup> At a minimum, drug tests check for marijuana, cocaine, opiates, phencyclidine, and amphetamines.

driver did not exceed hours of service limits in the month prior to the crash. See the *Human Performance Factual* for additional information on his duty hours.

## **1.6. Vehicle Technology**

According to the FirstFleet vice president, the accident truck was equipped with global position system tracking, a collision avoidance system, and rollover stability control. The accident truck was not equipped with a critical event recorder, which would alert the safety manager if the truck registered a hard brake event. See *Vehicle Factors Report* for additional information.

### **A. DOCKET MATERIAL**

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

#### LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Motor Carrier Attachment – FirstFleet MCMIS Report

Motor Carrier Attachment – Interview with FirstFleet Representatives

Motor Carrier Attachment – FirstFleet SAFER Report

Motor Carrier Attachment – FirstFleet Hiring Requirements

Motor Carrier Attachment – First Fleet Progressive Discipline Policy

Motor Carrier Attachment – FirstFleet Post-Crash Drug Testing Policy

#### END OF INFORMATION

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