



National Association
of State Directors
of Pupil Transportation Services

April 2013

NASDPTS Guidance Document
National Transportation Safety Board
Safety Recommendation H-11-48

Background:

National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Safety Recommendation H-11-14 was the result of the NTSB's investigation of a multivehicle collision that occurred near Gray Summit, Missouri on August 5, 2010. In that collision, traffic slowed in the approach to an active work zone on eastbound 44 (I-44), and motor vehicles merged from the closed left lane to the right lane. A 2007 Volvo truck-tractor with no trailer was traveling eastbound in the right lane and had slowed or stopped behind traffic. About 10:11 a.m. central daylight time, a 2007 GMC Sierra extended cab pickup truck merged from the left to the right lane and struck the rear of the Volvo tractor. The collision was the first in a series of three.

A convoy of two school buses from St. James High School, St. James, Missouri, was traveling eastbound in the right lane of I-44, approaching the slowed traffic and the collision ahead. The lead bus was a 71-passenger school bus, occupied by 23 passengers. Following closely behind the lead bus was a 72-passenger school bus, occupied by 31 passengers. Seconds after the lead bus passed a motorcoach that had pulled over and stopped on the shoulder, it struck the rear of the GMC pickup. This collision—the second in the series—pushed the pickup forward, overturning it onto the back of the Volvo tractor. The front of the lead bus was ramped upward, it came to rest on top of the GMC pickup and the Volvo tractor. Moments later, the following school bus struck the right rear of the lead bus.

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The driver of the GMC pickup truck and one passenger seated in the rear of the lead school bus were killed. A total of 35 passengers from both buses, the two bus drivers, and the driver of the Volvo tractor received injuries ranging from minor to serious. 18 people were uninjured. As a result of this investigation, the NTSB has issued 13 safety recommendations, including the one below which is addressed to NASDPTS, NAPT and NSTA.

Inform your members of the circumstances and events that contributed to the Gray Summit accident; discuss solutions for the driver, pretrip evacuations briefings, and vehicle, inspection, and technological issues presented in the report; and urge the implementation of these solutions among your members. (H-11-48)

On May 7, 2012, NASDPTS responded to NTSB summarizing the actions it had taken to inform members about the NTSB findings and plans to further implement Safety Recommendation H-11-48. NASDPTS Response plans included:

- Request that NTSB designate an NTSB staff member to give a thorough, technical presentation on the Gray Summit school bus crash to NASDPTS members at the annual NASDPTS conference in October 2012.
- Survey its state director members regarding requirements for and content of school activity pretrip evacuation briefings and create a model pretrip evacuation briefing and encourage states use.
- Encourage its members to ensure that state and local school bus driver training programs include a thorough overall review of the circumstances of the NTSB's findings and recommendations in the Gray Summit investigation.

At the annual NASDPTS conference, held in Memphis during October 2012, two separate presentations were given on the Gray Summit school bus crash:

- NTSB Vice Chairman, Christopher Hart, addressed a joint session of NASDPTS and NAPT members on the NTSB Gray Summit school bus crash investigation and the resulting Safety Recommendation H-11-48.
- Charlie Hood, State Director, Florida gave a presentation to NASDPTS members titled "What Went Wrong at Gray Summit".

Both presentations included thorough, technical information on all facets of the Gray Summit school bus crash and investigation that relate to school bus operations and are posted on the NASDPTS website.

NASDPTS conducted a survey of its state director members in the fall of 2012 regarding requirements for and content of school activity pretrip evacuation briefings. The results of that survey are summarized below:

- 28 state directors responded to the survey.
- 6 states required pretrip briefings on regularly scheduled routes.
- 10 states required pretrip briefings on activity trips.
- 18 states had no requirement for pretrip briefings on activity trips.
- 6 states had a standard or model pretrip briefing.
- 6 states included emergency evacuation in the pretrip briefing.

Guidance:

Pursuant to NTSB Safety Recommendation H-11-48, NASDPTS recommends that state directors, through newsletters, websites, conferences and other available means:

- Inform all school districts, charter schools, contractors, private schools, and other school transportation providers about the findings of the NTSB investigation of the Gray Summit school bus crash.
- Inform all school districts, charter schools, contractors, private schools, and other school transportation providers that a model activity pretrip briefing is available on the NASDPTS website and encourage utilization of an activity pretrip briefing on all activity trips.
- Encourage all school districts, charter schools, contractors, private schools, and other school transportation providers to ensure that school bus driver training programs include a thorough overall review of the circumstances of the NTSB's findings and recommendations of the Gray Summit investigation. This should include all aspects pertaining to student transportation, including: training and reminding drivers of appropriate visual scanning techniques and maintaining proper following distance; recommending that all students participate in school bus evacuation drills, and ensuring that school bus inspectors and maintenance technicians are aware of guidelines and best practices for inspection and condition of all mechanical and safety systems on the bus, including braking systems.

This Guidance Document and the other referenced documents can be found at www.nasdpts.org. Comments and questions should be directed to Bob Riley, Executive Director, execdir@nasdpts.org, 970 871 1784.