



PRELIMINARY REPORT

HIGHWAY

HWY14FH007

The information in this report is preliminary and will be supplemented or corrected during the course of the investigation.

About 8:15 a.m. (local time) on February 21, 2014, a 2002 Ford 350 XLT 15-passenger van occupied by three adults and seven children, ranging in age from 12 to 16-years-old, was traveling northbound on Interstate 75 (I-75) near Lake City, Florida, when it experienced a complete tread belt separation of the left rear tire. The driver lost control of the vehicle, and the van rotated clockwise as it veered to the right. It departed the roadway onto a grassy embankment and rolled over before coming to a rest on its left side. As a result of the crash, two adults and two children were ejected from the vehicle. The two ejected adults died, while the ejected children suffered injuries. All the remaining van occupants received various injuries and were transported to area hospitals for treatment. According to local law enforcement, none of the ejected occupants were wearing seat belts.

The van, which was operated by the First Baptist Church in New Port Richey, Florida, was en route to a church camp in Covington, Georgia. During the trip, the 52-year-old driver had become concerned about a noise he heard coming from one of the vehicle's tires, and he pulled off the highway to investigate. Finding nothing wrong, the driver continued an additional 13 miles, before the tread belt separation occurred.



Final rest position of 15-passenger van. (Photo courtesy of Florida Highway Patrol)

Records show that the left rear tire was manufactured by BF Goodrich, and a [Safety Recall Notice](#) for the tire had been issued on July 26, 2012. The tire was recalled due to the potential that it may experience tread loss and/or rapid air loss resulting from tread belt separation.

The section of I-75 where the crash occurred is comprised of three 12-foot-wide lanes in each direction with a 10-foot-wide shoulder adjacent to edge of the roadway. The roadway was straight and level with a guardrail bordering the left northbound lane. The posted speed limit was 70 mph. At the time of the crash, the weather was clear, and the road conditions were dry.