



PRELIMINARY REPORT

HIGHWAY

HWY14FH013

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

On Sunday, September 21, 2014, about 4:20 p.m. eastern daylight time, a 1996 Setra motorcoach, operated by AM USA Express Incorporated, was traveling south on Delaware Route 1 in the vicinity of Red Lion, Delaware. The motorcoach, which was occupied by a 56-year-old driver and 50 passengers, entered a curved access ramp from Delaware Route 1 to US 13 north. The single-lane access ramp curved from left to right with a decreasing radius. Over 400 feet of arching tire marks was documented on the roadway surface. The tire marks indicate that, shortly after the motorcoach entered the sharper portion of the curve, it began to run off the left outside pavement edge. The motorcoach entered a grass and dirt area and rolled over onto its left side, coming to rest about 28 feet off the roadway. As a result of the rollover, three passengers received fatal injuries; the driver and additional 47 passengers sustained injuries, ranging from minor to serious. Except for the driver's seat, the vehicle was not equipped—nor was it required to be equipped—with seat belts. The motorcoach sustained extensive damage to the left side, roof, and related support structures. The majority of the left-side windows were displaced during the rollover event.

Using 3D laser scanning technology, National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigators documented the accident scene and the motorcoach (see figures 1 and 2).



Figure 1. Three-dimensional scan of the 1996 Setra motorcoach.



Figure 2. Three-dimensional scan of the Delaware Route 1 access ramp to US Route 13 northbound.

NTSB investigators are analyzing information to determine the activities of the motorcoach driver leading up to and during this trip. On the day of the crash, the trip originated from the Hagerstown, Maryland, area, and the vehicle traveled to Washington DC, where the passengers toured various attractions. From there, the motorcoach was to travel to Independence Mall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and conclude the trip in New York, New York. NTSB investigators are continuing to analyze information to determine the speed of the motorcoach prior to the crash and the speed at which it overturned.

The motorcoach operator, which is based in New York, New York, operates four motorcoaches and two mini buses. At the time of the accident, the carrier had not received a safety rating and was considered to be an unrated carrier. NTSB investigators continue to work with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to conduct an in-depth review of the company's safety and operation practices.