1. CASE: 8783
3a. ACCIDENT TYPE: Mechanical Failure
4a. DATE: January 10, 2006
5. ACCIDENT LOCATION: Second Avenue at East 96th Street
6. TOWN/CITY/BOROUGH: Manhattan
8. BUS NUMBER: 7317
9. NUMBER OF INJURIES: 0
11. HOURS OF SERVICE: 5 hrs and 49 min in last 24 hrs/46 hrs and 37 min in last 7 days
12. SYNOPSIS:

At approximately 3:20 p.m., MTA Bus Company (MTA BC) bus #7317 was traveling southbound on Second Avenue to the rear of an auto. The auto stopped for a red traffic signal. The bus driver applied the brakes, however, the front of the bus made contact with the rear of the auto. No injury claims were reported. The bus driver claimed a mechanical failure of the brakes. The NYC Police responded to the accident and no summonses were issued.

In the vicinity of the accident site, Second Avenue is an 80 foot wide, one way road divided by white broken line pavement marking, accommodating four southbound travel lanes. East 96th Street is a 62 foot wide, two-way road divided by a full barrier yellow pavement marking, accommodating two westbound and two eastbound travel lanes. Both streets are straight, level and asphalt paved. Parking is permitted at the curbs. The traffic at the intersection is controlled by 6 traffic signals. At the time of the accident it was daylight and the weather was dry and clear. The posted area speed limit is 30 mph.

Bus #7317 is a 1988 MCI Classic coach bus with a seating capacity of 53 passengers. A review of the bus records indicated that Preventive Maintenance Inspections (PMI) are performed at Eastchester Depot at regular 6,000 mile intervals or every 3 month, whichever comes first. The most recent PMI was completed on January 4, 2006. The bus had traveled 63 miles at the time of the accident. A post accident inspection of bus #7317 was conducted by the Public Transportation Safety Board (PTSB) staff in conjunction with NYCT staff on January 11, 2006. The inspection revealed that the brake shoe – drum clearances were out of limits on all four wheels. Accordingly, the brakes failed the deceleration test substantially below minimum allowed by the NYS DOT Regulations. Further investigation revealed that no sudden brake failure occurred on the bus at the time of the accident. It was determined that the bus exhibited a pre-existing long brake condition existing since January 4, 2006. The maintenance record revealed that the bus underwent a PMI on January 4, 2006. The depot performed a 4 wheel brake refine installing two new rear drums and a right rear spider. The record indicates that a brake test was performed on the bus and it met the established specifications. The bus was returned to passenger service and driven 63 miles prior to the collision. The post accident measurements indicated that the rear brakes were completely out of adjustment and the failure could not occur during the 63 miles. Therefore, the most probable cause of the long brake condition is the failure of the maintainer to perform quality work.
The bus driver was hired by New York Bus Service on October 14, 1980, and completed the company's new bus operator training program. A review of the bus driver's Department of Motor Vehicles records for the last three years showed no violations or suspensions. New York State Vehicle & Traffic Law, Article 19-A records were complete and up-to-date. A review of the driver's MTA BC record for the last three years revealed no collision accidents. A post accident drug and alcohol test administered to the bus driver 3 hours and 33 minutes after the accident was negative. The delay in administering the drug and alcohol test was due to the bus driver being detained at the scene for the purpose of investigation.

In an interview with the PTSB staff the bus driver indicated that he was driving southbound on Second Avenue to the rear of an auto, with an approximate speed of 10 mph and a following distance about 80 feet. The traffic signal at East 96th Street turned yellow and the auto stopped. The bus driver stated that he applied the brakes, however, the bus did not respond as he expected and the front of the bus made contact with the rear of the auto. He indicated that he was driving the bus for approximately 35 minutes prior to the accident and drove the bus the previous day for 5 hours and 35 minutes, and did not have any braking concerns.

The Public Transportation Safety Board staff finds that the most probable cause of the accident was the failure of the bus maintainer to properly install the slack adjuster, adjust the brakes after the reline, and perform a proper road brake test.

Contributing to the accident was the failure of the bus driver to identify a long brake condition during the pre-trip inspection of the bus on two consecutive days.

MTA BC reviewed the accident on February 14, 2006 and found it to be preventable. The bus driver was issued a written warning. The bus driver was retrained, his performance was evaluated as satisfactory and he was returned to passenger service.

The maintenance department has identified the three mechanics who on January 4 completed a rear reline on the bus. All three were issued a verbal warning. In addition, the entire maintenance department has held a shop meeting on the proper installation of brake chamber rods. Also as an additional safety measure, the parts department has been advised that a supervisor must be advised immediately when a brake chamber is signed out to a maintainer.

Based on the action taken by MTA Bus Company regarding this accident, the Public Transportation Safety Board staff makes no recommendations.

INVESTIGATOR: Mikhail Palanker

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CHIEF ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SECTION

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DIRECTOR, MCSB, NYSDOT

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DATE 12/22/07

DATE 1/22/07