PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
ABBREVIATED BUS ACCIDENT REPORT

1. CASE: 9097

2. PROPERTY NAME: MTA-NYCT

3a. ACCIDENT TYPE: Collision
3b. Accident Severity Index: .80

4a. DATE: 9/6/2006
4b. TIME: 7:50 am

5. ACCIDENT LOCATION: Verrazano Narrows Bridge

6. TOWN/CITY/BOROUGH: Staten Island

7. SUMMONS: none

8. BUS NUMBER: 1869
8a. YEAR: 1998
8b. MAKE: MCI

9. NUMBER OF INJURIES: 1
10. FATALITIES: 0

11. HOURS OF SERVICE: 15.5 in last 24 hrs/.42.5 in last 7days

12. SYNOPSIS:
At approximately 7:50 am, MTA New York City Transit (NYCT) bus #1869 was traveling eastbound on the Verrazano Narrows Bridge with an approximate speed of 33 mph (25 mph zone) merging across lanes right to left, behind a tractor trailer. The tractor trailer stopped for traffic and the bus driver, with insufficient following distance, applied his brakes. The bus driver was unable to stop the bus and collided with the rear of the tractor trailer. The left front of the bus made contact with the right rear of the trailer. The bus operator and 25 passengers claimed injury, however only 13 were transported and treated. The bus sustained extensive damage with slight damage to the trailer. The police responded to the accident and issued a summons to the bus operator for careless operation.

In the vicinity of the accident site, the Verrazano Narrows Bridge has a controlled entry facilitated by 9 lanes with toll booths which are reduced to 6 lanes within a distance of 475 feet past the toll booths. The roadway, for eastbound travel, is asphalt paved, slightly graded uphill and at the time of the accident it was day light, and the weather was dry. The posted area speed limit is 25 mph.

Bus #1869 is a 1998 MCI coach type bus with a seating capacity of 53 passengers. A review of the bus records indicated that Preventive Maintenance Inspections (PMI) are performed at Yukon Depot at regular 6,000 mile intervals, and the most recent was completed on July 7, 2006. The bus had traveled 5,153 miles at the time of the accident. A post accident inspection of bus #1869 was conducted by the Public Transportation Safety Board (PTSB) staff on September 12, 2006 in conjunction with NYCT personnel. There were no safety or recurring defects noted in the 45 days prior to the accident. The inspection revealed that the bus sustained significant frontal damage and decelerometer tests could not be performed.

The bus driver was hired by MTA NYCT on January 25, 1993 and completed the standard “New Bus Operator Training Program”. A review of the driver's Department of Motor Vehicles records for the last 3 years showed no violations or convictions. New York State Vehicle & Traffic Law, Article 19-A records were complete and up-to-date. A review of the driver's MTA NYCT record for the last three years revealed two collisions (one preventable) and a depot suspension for speeding on August 17, 2005.
A post accident drug and alcohol test administered to the bus driver 4 hours and 29 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.

The investigation showed that according to the data obtained at the accident site, the data from the bus’s Electronic Control Module, the results of the post accident inspection of the bus, performed calculations and the statement of the bus driver, it is most likely that the bus was traveling eastbound through the toll plaza of the Verrazano Narrows Bridge and accelerated with a minimum initial speed of 33 mph. The tractor trailer moving in front of the bus slowed down and stopped for traffic. The bus driver applied the brakes, however, due to excessive speed and an insufficient following distance was unable to avoid striking the rear of the trailer.

The Public Transportation Safety Board staff finds that the most probable cause of the accident was the failure of the bus operator to drive under control, maintain a safe speed and maintain a safe following distance.

The MTA NYCT reviewed the accident and found it to be preventable. The bus operator was dismissed as a result of his actions. The discipline was appealed through a labor management hearing process resulting in the driver being issued a 20 day suspension. Subsequently, the bus driver was retrained, his performance was evaluated as satisfactory and he was returned to passenger service.

Based on the action of the MTA NYCT regarding the accident, the Public Transportation Safety Board staff makes no recommendation.

INVESTIGATOR: Mikhail Palanker

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CHIEF, ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SECTION \ DATE

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DIRECTOR, PCSB, NYSDOT \ DATE