1. CASE: 9145
3a. ACCIDENT TYPE: Multiple Injury
4a. DATE: October 19, 2006
5. ACCIDENT LOCATION: Webster Avenue at East 180th Street
6. TOWN/CITY/BOROUGH: Bronx
8. BUS NUMBER: 420
8a. YEAR: 1994
8b. MAKE: Orion
9. NUMBER OF INJURIES: 7
10. FATALITIES: 0
11. HOURS OF SERVICE: 1 hr and 24 min in last 24 hrs/46 hrs and 24 min in last 7 days
12. SYNOPSIS:

At approximately 2:00 pm MTA New York City Transit (NYCT) bus #420 traveling northbound on Webster Avenue was pulling out from a near side bus stop at East 180th Street, when a tractor trailer moving in the same direction to the left of the bus attempted to make a right turn onto 180th Street from the #2 travel lane. The left front section of the bus made contact with the right side mid section of the tractor trailer. Eight bus passengers claimed various injuries and seven of them were transported to local hospitals, treated and released. One passenger was treated at the scene and released. Both the bus and the tractor trailer sustained slight damage. NYC Police responded to the accident and no summonses were issued.

In the vicinity of the accident site, Webster Avenue is a 62 foot wide, two-way road divided by a full barrier yellow pavement marking accommodating two northbound and two southbound travel lanes. East 180th Street is a 40 foot wide, two-way road, starts as a T-intersection at Webster Avenue, and is divided by a full barrier yellow pavement marking accommodating two westbound and two eastbound travel lanes. Both roadways are straight, level and asphalt paved. Parking is permitted at the curbs. At the time of the accident it was daylight and the weather was dry and clear. The posted area speed limit is 30 mph. The traffic at the intersection is controlled by four traffic signals.

Bus # 420 is a 1994 Orion transit bus with a seating capacity of 39 passengers. A review of the bus records indicated that Preventive Maintenance Inspections (PMI) are performed at West Farms Depot at regular 3,000 mile intervals, with the most recent completed on October 17, 2006. The bus had traveled 151 miles at the time of the accident. A post accident inspection of bus #420 was conducted by the Public Transportation Safety Board (PTSB) staff in conjunction with NYCT personnel on October 20, 2006. No defects were found that would be considered as causative factors in this accident. Decelerometer tests were performed on the braking systems and showed stopping distances that slightly exceeded the MTA NYCT adopted standards (by 0.9%) for passenger vehicles of NYS DOT Regulations (Title 17 of NYCCRR, Article 3, Part 720). The failure of the service brakes, mentioned above, did not affect the accident due to being a low speed (approximately 1-2 mph) collision.

The bus driver was hired by the MTA NYCT on February 8, 1993, and completed the standard “New Bus Operator Training Program”. A review of the bus driver’s Department of Motor Vehicles records 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 NYCT record for the last three years revealed one preventable collision accident on 10/07/04 resulting in a verbal warning, and one non-preventable collision accident on 12/15/03. A post accident drug and alcohol test administered to the bus driver 4 hours and 30 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 she made a service stop at the near side bus stop on Webster Avenue at East 180th Street. She stated that one customer boarded the bus, then she closed the doors and positioned the bus to make a right turn onto East 180th Street. She turned wheels to left and moved the bus forward when she heard crunch by the left mirror. She looked towards left side and saw the tractor trailer making right turn.

The driver of the tractor trailer indicated that he was making a right turn onto East 180th Street from the #2 travel lane on Webster Avenue. He claimed that while he was completing the right turn the bus moved forward from the bus stop, approximately 3-4 feet and collided with the right side of the trailer, after approximately 35 feet of the tractor trailer had passed the bus.

The investigation showed that according to the final rest positions of both vehicles, the location of the collision debris, the damage to both vehicles, the statements of the bus driver and the tractor trailer driver, it is most likely that the tractor trailer started to perform the right turn from the #2 travel lane onto East 180th Street while bus was still stopped. Then the bus started to move forward and the left front corner of the bus made contact with the middle of the trailer.

The Public Transportation Safety Board staff finds that the most probable cause of the accident was the failure of the bus driver to observe the tractor trailer, identify it as hazard and determine when to safely move the bus.

The MTA NYCT reviewed the accident o December 18, 2006, and found it to be preventable. Due to being the first not major preventable accident in twelve months, no discipline was issued to the bus driver. The bus driver was retrained, her performance was evaluated as satisfactory and she was returned to passenger service.

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

INVESTIGATOR: Mikhail Palanker

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CHIEF, ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SECTION          DATE

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DIRECTOR, PCSB, NYSDOT                DATE