On June 27, 2008, at approximately 5:35 p.m., an MTA New York City Transit (NYCT) bus #8785 moving northbound on Gold Street was making a right turn onto York Street. The right side of the bus made contact with a utility pole located at the south-east corner of the intersection. The bus driver and four bus passengers claimed various injuries, were transported to local hospitals, where they were treated and released. The bus sustained moderate damage.

In the vicinity of the accident site, York Street is a 42 foot wide, two way road divided by a full barrier yellow pavement marking, accommodating one eastbound and one westbound travel lane. Gold Street is a 65 foot wide, two way road divided by a 4.5 foot wide concrete divider, accommodating one northbound and one southbound travel lane. Parking is permitted at the curbs. Both roadways are straight, level and asphalt paved. At the time of the accident the weather was dry and clear. The area speed limit is 30 mph.

Bus #8785 is a 1996 RTS transit type bus with a seating capacity of 40 passengers. A review of the bus records indicated that Preventive Maintenance Inspections (PMI) at Grand Avenue Depot are performed at regular 4,000 mile intervals. The most recent PMI was performed on June 13, 2008 and the bus had traveled 1,101 miles. There were no safety or recurring defects noted in the 45 days prior to the accident. A post accident inspection of bus #8785 was conducted by the Public Transportation Safety Board (PTSB) staff in conjunction with MTA NYCT staff on July 2, 2008 and no defects were found that would be considered causative factors in this accident. Decelerometer tests were performed on the braking systems that showed stopping distances that met the standards for passenger vehicles of NYS DOT Regulations (Title 17 of NYCRR, Article 3, Part 720).

The bus driver was hired by the MTA NYCT on February 21, 2006, 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 bus driver’s MTA NYCT record for the time since he was hired showed two non-preventable collision accidents. The post accident drug and alcohol test administered to the bus driver 4 hours and 48 minutes after the accident was negative. The delay in administering the drug and alcohol test was due to the bus driver being transported to a local hospital and treated.
In an interview with the PTSB staff, the bus driver indicated that he was driving northbound on Gold Street on a green traffic signal, making a right turn onto York Street, when he observed a white box truck coming in the opposite direction to the left of the bus. A few seconds later an auto moving to the rear of the truck suddenly entered the path of the bus in an attempt to pass the truck. The bus driver stated that to avoid a head on collision with the auto, he swerved to the right and the right rear wheel of the bus collided with a utility pole.

The Public Transportation Safety Board finds that the most probable cause of the accident was the failure of the bus driver to maintain control of his bus while performing a right turn.

The MTA NYCT reviewed the accident on October 2, 2008, and found it to be preventable.

The bus driver was issued a twenty day suspension. The bus driver was retrained, his performance was evaluated as satisfactory and he was returned to passenger service.

INVESTIGATOR: Mikhail Palanker

CHIEF, ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SECTION

DATE

DIRECTOR, PCSB, NYSDOT

DATE