**PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD**  
**ABBREVIATED BUS ACCIDENT REPORT**

1. **CASE#:** 9938  
2. **PROPERTY NAME:** MTA LIB Para  
3a. **ACCIDENT TYPE:** Hit other in rear  
3b. **Accident Severity Index:** 2.60  
4a. **DATE:** August 11, 2008  
4b. **TIME:** 1:17 p.m.  
5. **ACCIDENT LOCATION:** Northern Boulevard at Forest Drive  
6. **TOWN/CITY/BOROUGH:** Roslyn, NY  
7. **SUMMONS:** No  
8. **BUS NUMBER:** 2194  
8a. **YEAR:** 2008  
8b. **MAKE:** International  
9. **NUMBER OF INJURIES:** 7  
10. **FATALITIES:** 0  
11. **HOURS OF SERVICE:** 8 hr 30 min in last 24 hrs/76 hrs 0 min in last 7 days  
12. **SYNOPSIS:**  
At approximately 2:45 p.m., MTA Long Island Bus Paratransit (LIB) bus #2194 was traveling in the left travel lane on westbound Northern Boulevard and approaching the red traffic signal at the intersection with Forest Drive when the bus driver claimed that his pant leg got caught on the seat release lever causing it to move and lock in the most forward position. This caused him to not be able to move his right foot from the accelerator to the brake pedal and resulted his initiating a chain reaction collision involving the bus colliding with the rear of auto #1, pushing it into auto #2 (overturning it), which collided with the rear of auto #3, which then collided with the rear of auto #4. The bus came to rest in the oncoming travel lane at Forest Drive. The bus driver, one bus passenger, all four auto drivers and one auto passenger claimed various non-life threatening injuries and were all transported to a local hospital where they were all released following treatment. The bus and autos #1 and #2 sustained extensive damage from the collisions with autos #3 and #4 sustaining moderate damage.

In the vicinity of the accident site Northern Boulevard is a two-way east/west roadway divided into two travel lanes and a dedicated left turn lane in each direction. Forest Drive a two-way north/south roadway that forms the leg of a “T” type intersection with Northern Boulevard. Both roadways are asphalt paved, straight and in good condition. There is a slight downgrade in the westerly direction on Northern Boulevard. The intersection is controlled by standard traffic and pedestrian signals which, at the time of the accident investigation, were all functioning as designed. At the time of the accident it was daylight, the weather was clear and the roadway was dry. The area speed limit is 45 mph.

Bus #2194 is a 2008 model Eldorado Bus on an International truck chassis type bus housed and maintained at the LIB Paratransit Depot.
A review of the bus records showed that Preventive Maintenance Inspections are performed at regular 3,000 mile intervals, the most recent was completed on October 11, 2008 and the bus had traveled 141 miles since then. There were no safety or recurring defects noted in the 45 days prior to the accident. Physical inspection of the bus on October 14, 2008 showed extensive collision damage to the entire front section of the bus. The bus was undrivable and the engine could not be started. However, inspection of the bus found no defects that could be considered a factor in the accident. Due to the damage sustained in the collision(s) no decelerometer tests were performed on the bus braking systems.

The bus driver was hired by MTA LIB for para-transit service on December 11, 2006 and successfully completed the LIB para-transit training program. A review of the driver’s NYS Department of Motor Vehicles record for the past three years showed no violations or convictions. NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law, Article 19-A records were reviewed and found to be complete, in-order and up-to-date. A review of the driver’s LIB accident record showed five non-preventable accidents (04/29/07, 07/21/07, 09/27/07, 01/08/08, 08/01/08) since his date of hire. Post accident drug and alcohol tests performed on the bus driver upon his release from the hospital, approximately 4 hours and 40 minutes from the time of the accident, were negative.

In an interview with LIB personnel at the accident scene bus driver indicated that he was traveling west on Northern Boulevard and, after cresting the slight rise in the roadway (the roadway continues on a slight downgrade after cresting the rise) he began to move from the right to the left travel lane. The driver further indicated that he observed that the traffic signal at the intersection with Forest Avenue was red and that there were vehicles stopped at the light. The driver said that there were two passengers on the bus and that just prior to the accident he was answering a question posed to him by one of the passengers and was also entering data into the Mobil Data Terminal (MDT) 1. The bus driver said that all of a sudden the bus seat moved violently forward causing him to get his foot caught in a way that he was unable to move his foot off of the accelerator onto the brake and lose control of the bus. The driver indicated that by the time he regained control of the bus he was unable to avoid colliding with the rear of one of the autos stopped at the red light which then caused the chain reaction collision involving multiple other vehicles.

In an interview with the Public Transportation Safety Board (PTS) staff the bus driver made essentially the same statement. He did however, say that he believed that when he accessed the MDT his pant leg caught on the seat adjustment lever, which sticks out from under the front of the seat, which caused it to suddenly move forward and lock. The driver said that this made him unable to move his foot off of the accelerator onto the brake and caused the accident.

The PTS staff interviewed four other LIB Para-transit drivers at the accident scene and three others at the bus depot the day after the accident.

1 The Mobil Data Terminal is used to track pick up and drop off times of passengers on the bus. It is located on the bus dashboard to the right of the driving position and requires that the person entering or reading data from the drivers seat lean to the right to enter or read data. It is a violation of LIB policy to access or read data from the terminal while driving the bus.
None of the drivers indicated that they have, or have ever had, a problem with either the bus seat, the seat adjustment lever or with the position of the bus brake and accelerator pedals. The PTSB staff examined the seat adjustment lever and found nothing that could be considered a problem with its location or length when a driver is properly seated. However, if a driver were to attempt to access the MDT while driving – it is possible that a driver’s leg could possibly move the seat adjustment lever enough to cause the seat to move, which is most likely what happened in this accident. Further, it is also a violation of MTA LIB policy for a bus driver to actively converse with bus passengers while operating a bus.

The Public Transportation Safety Board staff finds that most probable cause of this accident were the multiple failures of the bus driver to adhere to MTA LIB policies (accessing the MDT and actively conversing with bus passengers) which most likely caused his inattention to properly perform his driving duties and resulted in the bus driver to loosing control of the bus.

Shortly after this accident the bus driver resigned his position with the Para-transit division of MTA LIB and sought other employment. The MTA Long Island Bus safety section, prior to closing the driver’s file, reviewed the facts concerning this accident and rated it to be preventable on the part of the bus driver.

Based on the action taken by the MTA Long Island Bus regarding this accident, the Public Transportation Safety Board staff makes no recommendation in this case.

INVESTIGATOR: Harry W. Gerham

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CHIEF, ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SECTION         DATE

__________________________________________  ________________________
DIRECTOR, PCSB, NYSDOT                       DATE