

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Virtual Meeting of November 14, 2023

(Information subject to editing)

Multivehicle Crash at Signalized Intersection, North Las Vegas, Nevada, January 29, 2022

This is a synopsis from the NTSB's report and does not include the Board's rationale for the findings, probable cause, and safety recommendations. NTSB staff is currently making final revisions to the report from which the attached findings and safety recommendations have been extracted. The final report and pertinent safety recommendation letters will be distributed to recommendation recipients as soon as possible. The attached information is subject to further review and editing to reflect changes adopted during the Board meeting.

Executive Summary

What Happened

On Saturday, January 29, 2022, about 3:12 p.m. Pacific standard time, a multivehicle crash occurred in the intersection of North Commerce Street and Cheyenne Avenue, in North Las Vegas, Clark County, Nevada. The crash was initiated by a 2018 Dodge Challenger passenger car, occupied by a driver and a front-seated passenger, traveling northbound on North Commerce Street. On approach to the intersection, the Dodge driver passed a slower moving truck, failed to stop at a stop sign, and gained speed, until reaching the traffic signal-controlled intersection with Cheyenne Avenue at a speed of 103 mph. The traffic signal for northbound North Commerce Street displayed a red light for at least 29 seconds prior to the crash. The Dodge driver entered the intersection on the red traffic signal and struck the right side of a Toyota Sienna minivan, which held seven occupants and was traveling eastbound on Cheyenne Avenue. Four additional vehicles traveling on Cheyenne Avenue became involved in subsequent impacts. As a result of the crash, the driver and passenger of the Dodge and all seven occupants of the Toyota minivan died.

What We Found

We found that the Dodge driver's use of cocaine and phencyclidine impaired his decision-making such that he accelerated to excessive speed and failed to obey traffic controls, resulting in the multivehicle crash. In addition, the Dodge driver's history as a repeat speeding offender and specific actions on the day of the crash

demonstrated a repeated disregard for safety and thus he was more likely to cause a fatal crash.

We also found that an intelligent speed assistance (ISA) system that electronically limits the speed of the vehicle may have mitigated the severity of the North Las Vegas crash. Improving public acceptance of ISA systems and wider voluntary deployment, such as by automakers, will facilitate the advancement of a new motor vehicle safety standard on ISA. We found that repeat speeding is a nationwide problem but evidence-based countermeasures targeting repeat speeding offenders are lacking. Further, inaccurate driver records reduce the likelihood that repeat speeding offenders can be accurately identified.

We determined that the probable cause of the North Las Vegas, Nevada, crash was the Dodge driver's excessive speed and failure to obey traffic control devices. Contributing to the driver's behavior was his impairment from the effects of cocaine and phencyclidine and his disregard for safety and traffic laws. Also contributing to the driver's repeated disregard for safety and traffic laws despite numerous citations was the state of Nevada's failure to deter the driver's speeding recidivism due to systemic deficiencies, including routine plea agreements that alter or drop violations, inaccurate driver records, failure to accurately track citations, and delays in reporting convictions.

What We Recommended

As a result of this investigation, we recommended that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) require ISA as standard equipment in all new vehicles, develop a communication plan to educate the public about the capabilities and benefits of ISA to mitigate speeding, update the Uniform Guidelines for State Highway Safety Programs to include tracking for repeat speeding offenders, develop countermeasures to reduce speeding recidivism, and develop guidelines to assist states in implementing pilot ISA interlock programs for high-risk drivers who speed.

We also recommended that the 50 states, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia implement programs identify repeat speeding offenders and measurably reduce speeding recidivism. In addition, we recommended that passenger vehicle manufacturers install as standard equipment ISA systems that, at a minimum, warn the driver when the vehicle exceeds the speed limit. We also recommended that the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety evaluate the safety outcomes of marketing by automobile manufacturers that emphasizes risky driving behaviors such as speeding. Finally, we reiterated Safety Recommendation H-17-24 to NHTSA to incentivize adoption of ISA systems by including ISA in the New Car Assessment Program.

Findings

1. None of the following were factors in this crash: (1) mechanical condition of the Dodge; (2) actions of other drivers; and (3) weather and visibility.
2. The emergency response was timely and adequate.
3. The Dodge driver's use of cocaine and phencyclidine impaired his decision-making such that he accelerated to excessive speed and failed to obey traffic controls, resulting in the multivehicle crash.
4. Both the Dodge driver's history and his specific actions on the day of the crash showed repeated disregard for safety and traffic laws.
5. Nevada's efforts to address Safety Recommendation H-22-39 through the development and implementation of its Impaired Driving Program Plan are conducive to increased safety.
6. Broad deployment of intelligent speed assistance would reduce the frequency of speeding and speeding-related crashes.
7. An active intelligent speed assistance system that electronically limits the speed of the vehicle may have mitigated the severity of the North Las Vegas crash.
8. Improving public acceptance of intelligent speed assistance systems and wider voluntary deployment, such as by automakers, will facilitate the advancement of a new motor vehicle safety standard on intelligent speed assistance.
9. Because the Dodge driver was a repeat speeding offender, he was more likely to cause a speeding-related fatal crash.
10. Inaccurate driver records, due to delays in reporting convictions, and plea agreements that alter or drop violations—such as what occurred in this case in the state of Nevada—reduce the likelihood that repeat speeding offenders can be accurately identified.
11. Electronic citation data tracking systems can help identify and track high-risk drivers, including repeat speeding offenders; however, the lack of guidance may result in inconsistencies among the states.
12. Repeat speeding is a nationwide problem, but evidence-based countermeasures targeting repeat speeding offenders and high-risk drivers are lacking.
13. Intelligent speed assistance systems have the potential to reduce speeding among repeat speeding offenders.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines that the probable cause of the North Las Vegas, Nevada, crash was the Dodge driver's excessive speed and failure to obey traffic control devices. Contributing to the driver's behavior was his impairment from the effects of cocaine and phencyclidine and his disregard for safety and traffic laws. Also contributing to the driver's repeated disregard for safety and traffic laws despite numerous citations was the state of Nevada's failure to deter the driver's speeding recidivism due to systemic deficiencies, including routine plea agreements that alter or drop violations, inaccurate driver records, failure to accurately track citations, and delays in reporting convictions.

Recommendations

New Recommendations

To the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:

1. Require as standard equipment in all new vehicles intelligent speed assistance systems that, at a minimum, warn the driver when the vehicle exceeds the speed limit.
2. Develop a communication plan to educate the public about the capabilities and benefits of intelligent speed assistance to mitigate speeding.
3. Update the Uniform Guidelines for State Highway Safety Programs to include identification and tracking of repeat speeding offenders.
4. Develop countermeasures to reduce speeding recidivism, determine their effectiveness, and then disseminate the results.
5. Conduct research and develop guidelines to assist states in implementing pilot intelligent speed assistance interlock programs, limiting the vehicle speed, for repeat speeding offenders.

To the 50 States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia:

6. Implement programs to identify repeat speeding offenders and measurably reduce speeding recidivism.

To BMW Group, Ferrari USA, Ford Motor Company, General Motors Company, American Honda Motor Company, Hyundai USA, Kia Motors Corporation, Mazda USA, Mercedes-Benz USA, Mitsubishi Motors, Nissan

USA, Porsche Cars North America, Stellantis, Subaru of America, Toyota Motor North America, Volkswagen Group, and Volvo Car Corporation:

7. Install as standard equipment in all new vehicles intelligent speed assistance systems that, at a minimum, warn the driver when the vehicle exceeds the speed limit.

To the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety:

8. Evaluate the safety outcomes of marketing by automobile manufacturers that emphasizes risky driving behaviors, including speeding. The evaluation should, at a minimum, compare vehicles based on engine size, power, and performance, and international approaches to such marketing. Publish a publicly available report.

Reiterated Recommendation

To the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:

Incentivize passenger vehicle manufacturers and consumers to adopt intelligent speed adaptation (ISA) systems by, for example, including ISA in the New Car Assessment Program. (H-17-24)