



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, DC 20594

Highway Accident Brief

Fatal Pedestrian Collision with Car Washington, DC, October 2, 2016

Accident Number:	HWY17SH001
Accident Type:	Fatal pedestrian collision with car
Location:	Georgia Avenue NW (US Route 29), Washington, DC
Date and Time:	October 2, 2016, about 3 a.m. eastern daylight time
Vehicle:	2008 Dodge Charger
Driver:	21-year-old male
Pedestrian:	23-year-old male
Fatalities:	1

Crash Description

Early on the morning of Sunday, October 2, 2016, an altercation started between four brothers in a restaurant/bar in the 5300 block of Georgia Avenue NW (US Route 29) in Washington, DC. Two of the brothers left the restaurant/bar and got into a 2008 Dodge Charger parked on the avenue just south of the establishment. The 21-year-old driver drove a block and a half north and made a U-turn. About 3 a.m., as the car traveled south on Georgia Avenue in the direction of the restaurant/bar, the driver's 23-year-old brother ran midblock into the southbound lanes, and the car struck him (figure 1).¹

From the postcrash state of the car and evidence on the roadway, investigators determined that after being struck, the pedestrian rolled off the car's hood and fell onto the asphalt on the driver's side. Officers from the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia arrived on scene at 3:05 a.m., and emergency medical personnel followed 3 minutes later. The pedestrian was taken to MedStar Washington Hospital Center, where he was pronounced dead at 3:29 a.m.

The crash occurred 3 hours before civil twilight (6:38 a.m.). The temperature at the time of the crash was 65°F, with light drizzle and winds of 4.6 mph.²

¹ Police could not determine the car's speed because of an absence of evidence such as skid marks or notable vehicle damage. In a postcrash interview, the driver told police he did not know how fast he was going.

² Weather data from <https://www.wunderground.com/history/>.

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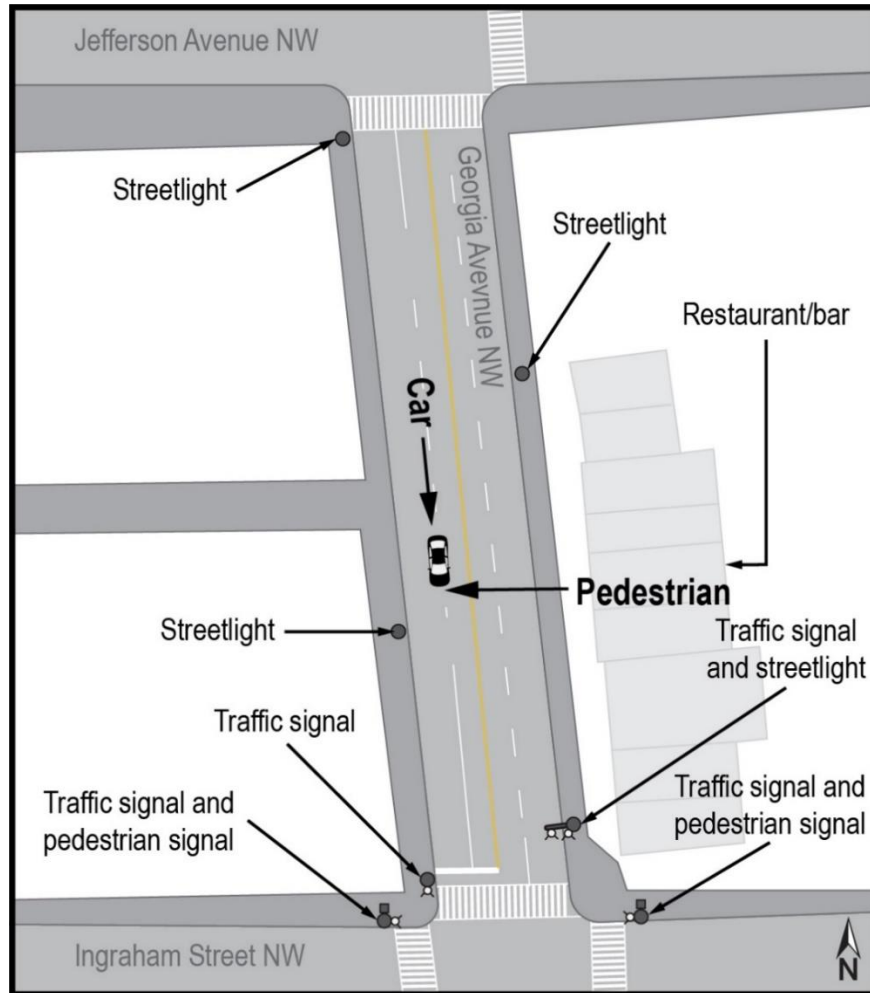


Figure 1. Diagram of crash scene showing path of crash car on Georgia Avenue NW and pedestrian's path across street to point of impact. Also shown is location of restaurant/bar that pedestrian left just before crash.

Crash Location

The 5300 block of Georgia Avenue NW is a straight, four-lane urban arterial road with a slight downhill slope from north to south (figure 2). The south- and northbound lanes are separated by a double yellow line, and cars park on both sides of the street. The avenue is lit with high-intensity streetlights and lined with trimmed mature trees that did not block the lights at the time of the crash. The two-story buildings on both sides of the avenue contain restaurants and other small businesses, and sidewalks run along both sides. Crosswalks are marked at either end of the block. The south end of the block is controlled by traffic lights. At the time of the crash, vehicle traffic was light. The speed limit in the area is 25 mph.

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Figure 2. Aerial view of 5300 block of Georgia Avenue NW where pedestrian was struck and killed. (Base photo from District of Columbia geographic information system)

Pedestrian

The pedestrian, who lived in Washington, DC, wore a dark shirt and dark pants at the time of the crash. His medical history was not determined. The pedestrian's body was examined by the District of Columbia Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. The examiner recorded the pedestrian's height as 5 feet 7 inches and his weight as 321 pounds.³ The pedestrian suffered contusions and abrasions to the face, head, back, abdomen, brain, and spinal cord; fractures to the skull; dislocation of the atlanto-occipital joint at the base of the skull; and contusions, abrasions, and lacerations to the legs and hands. The autopsy report listed the cause of death as blunt head, neck, trunk, and extremity trauma. A toxicological analysis of the pedestrian's blood showed a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.20.⁴ Results were negative for other drugs.

³ Pedestrian characteristics, such as height and weight, were documented to aid crash reconstruction and evaluate pedestrian injuries.

⁴ Research has shown that even low levels of alcohol can affect cognitive performance. At BACs above 0.10, individuals suffer impaired motor coordination, vision, hearing, and balance. Their reaction times are slower, and judgment and perception are impaired (Linda Dultz and Spiros Frangos, "The Impact of Alcohol in Pedestrian Trauma," *Journal of Injury, Infection, Trauma and Critical Care* [2012]: 1252–1257).

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Driver

The driver of the striking vehicle held a class D (noncommercial) driver's license issued by the District of Columbia, with no restrictions. The car was registered to him. A breathalyzer test administered about 2 hours after the crash measured the driver's BAC as 0.06. Results of a urine test were negative for other drugs. The driver's cell phone records showed that he had not texted or called anyone during the 3 1/2 hours before the crash.

Vehicle

The striking vehicle was a red 2008 Dodge Charger four-door sedan (figure 3). The car was examined at the scene. It had minimal damage from the impact with the pedestrian, and the driver and passenger air bags did not deploy during the crash. Investigators observed cloth (denim) transfer on the front edge of the hood and a small indentation on the front panel on the driver's side. Swipe marks from the pedestrian's clothing were also observed on the hood.



Figure 3. Crash car photographed at final rest position on Georgia Avenue NW. Green marks on pavement preserve position of wheels for investigative purposes.

Applicable Traffic Laws

District of Columbia municipal regulations, Title 18, section 23, regulate the movement of pedestrians on the roadway and establish the right-of-way between pedestrians and vehicles:

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2303.2 No pedestrian shall suddenly leave a curb, safety zone, loading platform or other designated place of safety and walk or turn into the path of a vehicle which is so close as to make it impossible for the driver to yield.

2304.1 Between adjacent intersections controlled by traffic control signal devices or by police officers, pedestrians shall not cross the roadway at any place except in a crosswalk.

2304.2 Each pedestrian crossing a roadway at any point other than within a marked crosswalk, or within an unmarked crosswalk at an intersection, shall yield the right-of-way to all vehicles upon the roadway.

2304.3 No pedestrian shall cross a roadway at any place other than by a route at right angles to the curb or by the shortest route to the opposite curb, except in a crosswalk.

Title 50, section 2201.28 requires drivers to yield the right-of-way to pedestrians in “any marked crosswalk, or unmarked crosswalk at an intersection.” Under Title 50, section 2206.11, drivers are prohibited from driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines that the probable cause of the crash in Washington, DC, was the pedestrian’s decision to run in front of the moving car. Contributing to his poor decision-making was impairment from the effects of alcohol intoxication. Also contributing to the crash was the driver’s impairment from the effects of alcohol, which most likely diminished his ability to detect and avoid the pedestrian.

BY THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

ROBERT L. SUMWALT, III
Chairman

EARL F. WEENER
Member

T. BELLA DINH-ZARR
Member

Adopted: July 31, 2018

For more details about this accident, visit the [NTSB public docket](#) and search for NTSB accident ID HWY17SH001. The accident dockets include such information as police reports, photographs, driver and witness statements, data on previous crashes, highway engineering reports, and timing of traffic signals.

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal

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issues and no adverse parties . . . and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person.” 49 *Code of Federal Regulations*, Section 831.4. Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. 49 *United States Code*, Section 1154(b).
