



PRELIMINARY REPORT HIGHWAY HWY19MH001

The information in this report is preliminary and will be supplemented or corrected during the course of the investigation.

About 1:55 p.m. eastern daylight time on Saturday, October 6, 2018, a 2001 Ford Excursion stretch limousine, operated by Prestige Limousine, was traveling southbound on New York State Route 30 (NY-30) approaching the intersection of New York State Route 30A (NY-30A) in Schoharie, Schoharie County, New York. The two roadways meet at a T-intersection, which has a posted speed limit of 55 mph. Traffic at the intersection (NY-30 and NY-30A) is controlled by a stop sign, and vehicles on NY-30 must turn either right or left. The limousine was occupied by a 53-year-old driver and 17 passengers. The limousine was rented for a private party to transport passengers from Amsterdam, New York, to Cooperstown, New York, with intermediate stops between the two locations. The limousine did not stop at the intersection as required; instead, it crossed NY-30A and entered a restaurant parking lot on the south side of the roadway. A witness in a vehicle that was stopped on NY-30 at the intersection stated that the limousine traveled through the intersection at a high rate of speed. The limousine collided with a 2015 Toyota Highlander sport utility vehicle (SUV) in the parking lot. At the time of the impact, three people were approaching the SUV, and the limousine's impact with the SUV caused the SUV to subsequently strike and kill two of the approaching pedestrians. The limousine continued across the parking lot and went into a ravine, where it collided with the earthen embankment on the far side and came to rest. (See figures 1 and 2.) As a result of the crash, 20 people were killed, including the 2 pedestrians who were approaching their parked vehicle and all 18 limousine occupants.

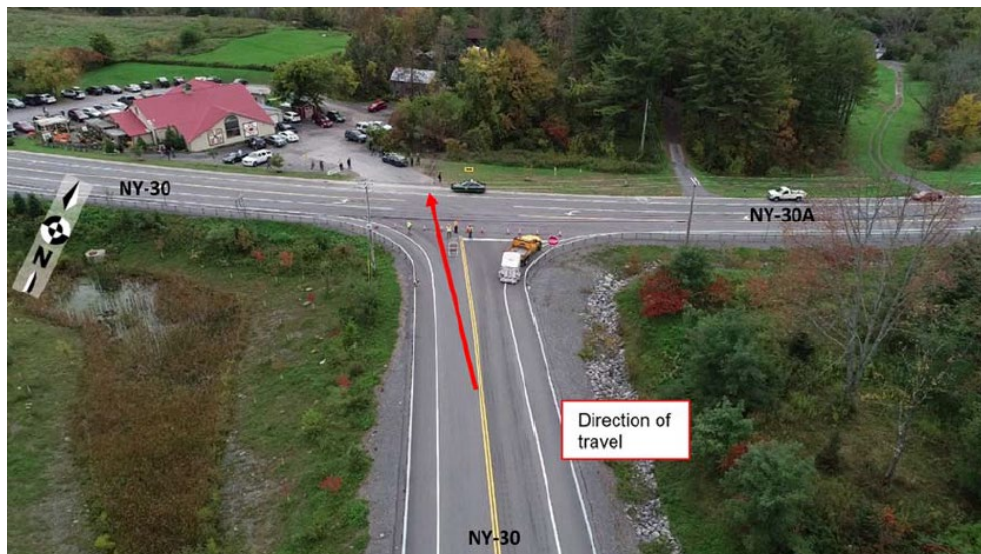


Figure 1. Crash location south of intersection of NY-30 and NY-30A; the limousine's collision with a parked SUV occurred in the parking lot, followed by collision in the ravine.



Figure 2. Crash-involved 2001 Ford Excursion stretch limousine at final rest in the ravine. (Source: New York State Police)

The original 137-inch-long wheelbase for the 2001 Ford Excursion had been lengthened by 180 inches to increase the seating capacity to 18 occupants (including the driver). To accommodate the additional passenger capacity, non-OEM (original equipment manufacturer) seats were installed in the vehicle. These non-OEM seats were equipped with lap belts and oriented passengers away from a traditional forward-facing seating configuration. Additionally, the vehicle's increased passenger capacity required the passenger-carrying operations of the limousine to be regulated by the New York State Department of Transportation. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) continues to gather information on the modifications and mechanical condition of the vehicle, the seat belt usage and survivability of the passengers, and the oversight of the passenger-carrying operation by the New York State Department of Transportation and New York State Department of Motor Vehicles.

All aspects of the Schoharie, New York, crash remain under investigation as the NTSB focuses on determining the probable cause, with the intent of issuing safety recommendations to prevent similar crashes. We are working in partnership with the New York State Police, state oversight agencies, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and the Ford Motor Company. Updates to the investigation will be provided as more information is developed.