

Crash Performance

The American Bus Association contracted the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute to perform an analysis of federally collected data for the years 1995–1999 contained in the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s Fatality Analysis Reporting System (F.A.R.S.).

The objective of this analysis was to identify incidents specifically involving OTRBs and observe whether it yielded new characteristics of over the road bus accidents.

The following is a summary of UMTRI’s analysis:

1. OTRBs account for a small percentage of total fatal bus accidents. Of the 300 fatal bus accidents in an average year, only 11 percent involved OTRBs, 40 percent involve school buses and 36 percent involve transit buses.
2. Fatigue is not a significant factor in bus accidents overall. For OTRBs, there was an average of only a fatigue related accident every 2.5 years. For all buses, fatigue was coded as a contributing factor for only five bus drivers out of a total of 1,483 buses involved in fatal accident over the five-year period.
3. OTRB accidents usually occur in populous states. Fatal bus accidents occur least often in sparsely populated states and most often in populous states.
4. OTRB accidents occur more during peak travel periods. While school bus fatal accidents are more likely to occur in the winter months, OTRB fatal accidents occur in higher percentages in the peak travel seasons of spring and fall.
5. Occurrences by the day of week. OTRB involved accidents occur more often on the weekends.
6. Occurrence by time of day – OTRB involvement do not demonstrate a notable pattern of occurrence at a particular time of day, however the peak time indicated during the years of study sample was in the late afternoon to early evening.
7. Manner of collisions – The most common fatal crash is head-on on rural, undivided roads. Rollovers and sidesweep accidents represent the least common manner of collision of buses involved in fatal accidents.