



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Research and
Special Programs
Administration**

The Administrator

400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

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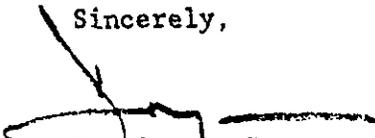
The Honorable Susan M. Coughlin
Acting Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, DC 20594

Dear Ms. Chairman:

This letter is in response to safety recommendations H-92-1 through H-92-6, which were issued by the Safety Board following an investigation of seven highway accidents involving DOT specification MC 306 and MC 312 cargo tanks. Although each of the cargo tanks was fitted with rollover damage protection devices, they overturned and released hazardous materials through damaged closures or fittings on the top of the tanks.

The six recommendations issued by the Board addressed concerns relative to the adequacy and enforcement of the DOT requirements regarding the structural integrity and the configuration of the rollover protection devices. We have reviewed the recommendations and our response is presented in the enclosed document.

Sincerely,


Douglas B. Ham
Acting Administrator

Enclosure



RSPA Response to NTSB Safety Recommendations
H-92-1 through H-92-6

Recommendation H-92-1

Provide cargo tank manufacturers with specific written guidance about (a) the factors and assumptions that must be considered when calculating the loads on cargo tank rollover protection devices in determining compliance with existing Department of Transportation performance standards; and (b) acceptable means to shield and protect the top-mounted closure fittings on all bulk liquid cargo tanks. (Class II, Priority Action)

Action on Recommendation H-92-1

We believe that it would be more cost effective and beneficial if specific guidelines were developed and implemented by industry. The Tank Truck Manufacturers Association (TTMA) has the experience and technical expertise necessary to develop effective guidance. The TTMA also has several ongoing and successful mechanisms for implementing such a program, including a cargo tank engineering committee which develops guidance materials that are published by TTMA in technical bulletins. TTMA has a recommended practice under development that addresses item (a) of the recommendation. RSPA will closely monitor TTMA's progress and responsiveness. This alternative approach to the recommendation is also consistent with the Administration's directions to reduce regulatory burdens and foster use of consensus standards where possible.

Recommendation H-92-2

Assist the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to evaluate the design of the rollover protection devices installed on all cargo tanks manufactured by the Acro Trailer Company and by New Progress, Incorporated, to determine if the cargo tanks comply with existing Department of Transportation standards. (Class II, Priority Action)

Action on Recommendation H-92-2

The Office of Motor Carrier Safety Field Operations in the Federal Highway Administration is in the process of awarding a contract to assess and evaluate the design calculations for the overturn protection devices used by ACRO Trailer Company and New Progress Inc. RSPA will assist the FHWA in evaluating the results of the contractor's study to determine if the cargo tanks comply with existing DOT standards.

Recommendations H-92-3, H-92-4 and H-92-5

Assist the Federal Highway Administration to improve the performance of the rollover protection devices on bulk liquid cargo tanks by:

- o Modeling and analyzing the forces that can act upon rollover protection devices during a rollover accident. (Class III, Long Term Action) (H-92-3)
- o Promulgating performance standards for rollover protection devices that are based on the engineering modeling and analysis conducted in response to Safety Recommendation H-92-3. (Class III, Longer Term Action) (H-92-4)
- o Phasing out from hazardous materials services the use of all cargo tanks that fail to meet the new performance standards promulgated in response to Safety Recommendation H-92-4. (Class III, Longer Term Action) (H-92-5)

Action on Recommendations H-92-3, H-92-4 and H-92-5

RSPA will assist the FHWA in their modeling and analysis of rollover protection devices and the forces acting upon them during accidents. We will also assist FHWA in implementing the remaining two recommendations if the results of the modeling and analysis indicate that additional standards are necessary.

Recommendation H-92-6

Implement, in cooperation with the FHWA, a program to collect information necessary to identify patterns of cargo tank equipment failures, including the reporting of all accidents involving a Department of Transportation specification cargo tank. (Class III, Longer Term Action) (H-92-6)

Action on Recommendation H-92-6

RSPA is examining the format and contents of DOT Form F 5800.1 reports (hazardous materials incident reports). Concurrently, FHWA is conducting a detailed review of the data received on cargo tank accident failures from their MCS 50-T accident reports. Both RSPA and FHWA systems will be compared and correlated to provide a comprehensive view of all accidents involving DOT specification cargo tanks.