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# Federal investigators' initial report on deadly N.H. crash offers no reason why truck driver hit bikers

By [Matt Rocheleau](#) Globe Staff, July 24, 2019, 11:11 a.m.



Motorcyclists passed by the scene of the crash during a memorial ride earlier this month. PAUL HAYES/CALEDONIAN-RECORD/ASSOCIATED PRESS/FILE/CALEDONIAN-RECORD VIA AP

It's still not clear what caused a truck driver to cross the center line on a New Hampshire highway last month before colliding with a group of motorcyclists, killing seven people, according to a preliminary report released Wednesday by a federal agency investigating the crash.

The two-page [report](#) from the National Transportation Safety Board provided no new information about the June 21 crash.

NTSB spokesman Peter C. Knudson said the investigation is ongoing.

When asked if the agency has identified any particular factors that may have contributed to the crash, or ruled out any factors, Knudson said in an e-mail: "We are still in the fact-gathering phase of the investigation so we have not ruled anything out at this point."

He said officials don't expect to announce additional details until the agency's probe is complete. Such investigations typically take about one to two years after the crash to finish, Knudson said.

If the agency uncovers any urgent safety issues, it may issue recommendations before the probe is done, he said.

Knudson said in an e-mail that the probe "will include an examination of federal oversight of the motor carrier, the motor carrier itself, the operating experience and history of the driver and the licensing of commercial drivers."

The report said the NTSB "continues to gather information about the commercial operation of the pickup truck and the licensing of the truck driver. All aspects of the Randolph, New Hampshire, 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 Hampshire State Police, state licensing agencies in New Hampshire and Massachusetts, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, and the US Department of Transportation Office of Inspector General,” the report added.

The truck driver, 23-year-old Volodymyr Zhukovskyy, had a [troubled history of driving infractions](#).

He was on his second assignment for Westfield Transport Inc. when his 2016 Dodge 2500 pickup allegedly crossed a double yellow line in Randolph, N.H., and collided with a group of motorcyclists headed in the opposite direction. The truck was towing a trailer.

Zhukovskyy [has pleaded not guilty](#) to seven counts of motor vehicle homicide and is being held without bail in New Hampshire.

Massachusetts officials acknowledged that Zhukovskyy should have had his driving privileges stripped weeks before joining Westfield Transport.

He had been arrested in East Windsor, Conn., on a charge of driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol on May 11, just five weeks before the fatal crash.

The crash has exposed widespread lapses in oversight at the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles.

After finding the Registry had failed to suspend Zhukovskyy's driving privileges, the Registry discovered it had ignored thousands of alerts from other states about violations committed by local drivers. The notifications had been stored, apparently unopened, in mail bins.

The Registry also found it had also failed for years to notify other states when Massachusetts drivers ran afoul of local driving laws.

On [Tuesday](#), Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey announced her office is investigating Westfield Transport.

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