



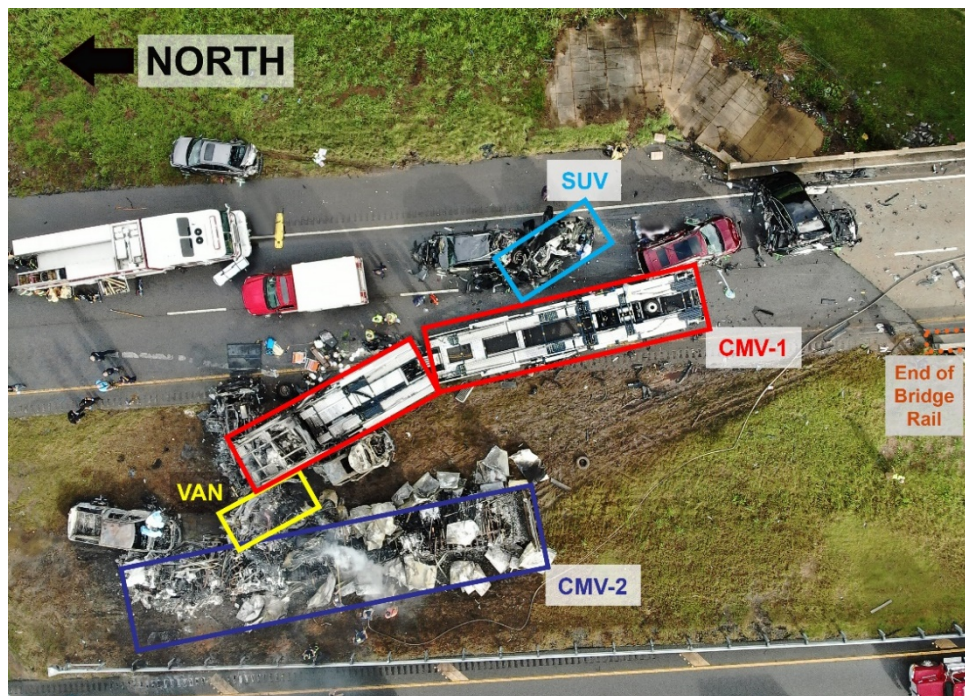
# PRELIMINARY REPORT

## HIGHWAY

### HWY21MH009

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

On Saturday, June 19, 2021, about 2:20 p.m. central daylight time, a 2020 Volvo truck-tractor in combination with an empty 2020 Cottrell auto transporter (CMV-1), operated by Hansen & Adkins Auto Transporter (Hansen), was traveling north in the right lane of Interstate 65 (I-65) near Greenville, in Butler County, Alabama, approaching the bridge over Pigeon Creek, near milepost 138. Traffic north of the bridge had slowed and stopped, forming a queue, due to a series of minor crashes. As it encountered the traffic queue, CMV-1 struck a 2020 Ford Explorer (SUV) in the queue, which was occupied by a driver and three passengers. After this initial impact, CMV-1 veered to the left, striking a Ford F350 transit van (van) occupied by a driver and nine passengers. After striking the van (and other queued vehicles), CMV-1 struck the left bridge rail and continued into the median beyond the north end of the bridge, coming to rest with a portion of its trailer in the roadway. As a result of being struck by CMV-1, the SUV overturned and struck several other vehicles in the traffic queue before coming to rest in the roadway. Following this series of collisions, a 2005 Freightliner truck-tractor/2009 Wabash dry trailer combination unit (CMV-2), operated by Asmat Express (Asmat) came upon the stopped vehicles, veered left, struck and mounted the left bridge rail, struck the van, and came to rest in the median. The van also came to rest in the median, facing south, between CMV-1 and CMV-2. As a result of the multiple collisions, a fire ensued. Fire consumed the combination units, the van, and three other vehicles (see figure).



**Figure.** Postcrash scene on I-65 north. Photo has been redacted (Source: Alabama Law Enforcement Agency)

In total, 12 vehicles and 38 vehicle occupants were involved in this crash event. Two SUV passengers and eight van passengers died as a result of the incident. Twenty-six people, including the drivers of the van and CMV-1, sustained injuries of varying degrees.

There had been intermittent bands of rain of varying intensity throughout the day, and a light rain was falling at the time of the crash.

In the area of the crash, I-65 is a four-lane, divided, asphalt-paved highway consisting of two travel lanes in each direction (northbound and southbound). The posted speed limit is 70 mph. The bridge crossing Pigeon Creek consists of twin bridge structures, each carrying one direction of traffic.

Hansen, the motor carrier of CMV-1, is an interstate carrier with 41 terminals throughout the United States. The company has 1,225 tractors and employs 914 drivers. The CMV-1 driver operated out of the Birmingham, Alabama, terminal. Asmat, the motor carrier of CMV-2, is an interstate carrier based in Clarkston, Georgia. The CMV-2 driver was an owner-operator.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) continues to collect data on the crash sequence, the postcrash fire, the weather conditions and precipitation amounts, and the operations of the motor carriers. All aspects of the crash remain under investigation as the NTSB determines the probable cause with the intent of issuing safety recommendations to prevent similar crashes. The NTSB is working alongside the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA), which is conducting a separate, parallel, criminal investigation. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, ALEA, and the Alabama Department of Transportation are parties to the NTSB investigation.