

**Minutes**  
**BISC Vehicle Technical Operations Committee**  
**January 17-18, 2010**  
**Washington, DC**

Committee Members in Attendance:

- Stephen Evans, (Pacific Western Transportation) - Chair
- David Carroll, (OMCA) - Recording Secretary
- David Mailhot, (C&J)
- Deny Bertrand, (Prevost Car)
- Wes Barber, (FMCSA)
- Bryan Couch, (MCI)
- Dan Quinter, (Starr Tours)
- Brian Packer, (MTR Western)
- Dennis Lyons, (Dattco)
- James Morra, (Adirondack Transit Lines)
- John Crowley, (Coach Canada)
- Pat Kightley, (Greyhound Canada)
- Anil Khadilkar, (AVK Engineering)
- Kerry Nivens, (Spirit Coach)
- Ashley Nesbitt, (FMCSA)
- Louis Hotard, (ABC Bus)
- Jeff Shank, (IC Bus)
- John Kay, (Kneal International)
- Bob Kaylor, (Coach USA)
- Jim Wurgler, (Northeast Trailways)
- Joe Haddad, (Strategic Safety Solutions)
- Les Sokolowski, (Strategic Safety Solutions)
- David Marchitello, (American Seating)
- Matt Daecher, (Daecher Consulting)
- Nathan Boor, (Fun Tours)

**1) Review of Minutes of January 11-12 BISC VTOC meeting in Charlotte NC**

Minutes were approved and accepted as written.

The Committee discussed the notion of BISC being used by vendors as a platform to show their wares and concerns over BISC “approving” or “endorsing” specific products. It was noted that this BISC meeting has 3 such vendors given time on the agenda. It was mentioned that BISC could be exposed to liability if BISC-approved product attracts a lawsuit. Also, VTOC expressed concern that vendors should be marketing their products at the Marketplace along with other exhibitors, and product and services vendors should be treated equally. VTOC members felt that BISC should not be encouraging such presentations and demonstrations by vendors. Note: VTOC concerns in this area were

conveyed to Norm Littler the following morning (January 18<sup>th</sup>) when Norm was looking for feedback on the SSS, Portable Seat Belt and ramp product presentations.

## **2) Coach-Loader Ramp**

- Paul Murphy of Inspired Solutions International demonstrated his aluminum ramp to facilitate loading heavy cargo in coach baggage bays
- The ramp can support 1,000 lbs is 30 inches wide and has an 18% slope
- \$530 each
- Can be used where curb cuts don't exist
- Is Veterans Affairs compliant
- Some concern expressed that top edge could slip off sill of baggage compartment if icy, etc.
- Some concern over possible "pinch points" for driver fingers, however Paul said the yellow hinge caps mitigate the risk
- Overall, VTOC is impressed with the product and feels it has the potential to increase loading safety and reduce back injuries

## **3) VTOC Reactions to Strategic Safety Solutions Presentation**

- VTOC discussed the presentation made by SSS on Sunday afternoon
- Presentation was not well done, too long, poor slides and too much detail
- Concern was expressed that this company's service is not particularly unique and other BISC members are already providing similar services or can be contracted to provide such services on request
- Ditto remarks above re: concerns over vendors using BISC to market their products and gain an advantage over other ABA members or exhibitors that pay to be in Marketplace

## **4) EOBR's**

- As previously discussed at VTOC, the committee supports in principle the concept of using EOBR's to automate and simplify HOS record-keeping, however, the concern is the variability in the approach and the confusion and costs that can arise if there is not clarity on the standards, protocols, etc.
- EOBR is not the solution to driver fatigue, it is only a tool to encourage compliance with the law
- EOBR's are not a panacea...fatigue management is a far bigger issue as the law cannot regulate sleep or the driver's activities during his /her off-duty hours
- Concern about driver who works for more than one carrier – how will hours be recorded for multiple employers?
- VTOC recognizes that EOBR's are coming and we can't stop it, but we can help influence and shape the standards and protocols to ensure the technology is practical, affordable and effective
- Concern about will own the data? Will enforcement officers have access to all data in the system?

## 5) VTOC Reactions to Portable Seat Belt Presentation

- Presenters appeared ill-prepared and did not even have a sample to show
- Video demo showed a transit bus test – they should have come with a motor coach test as seats are vastly different and may not lend themselves to the current portable seat belt design
- Portable Belt did not seem to perform much better than the lap-only belted dummy in the test (dummy fell out of position)
- One VTOC member said he already has a lap-belt retro-fit solution that costs the same as outfitting a coach with portable seat belts (\$5,000 to \$8,000 a bus)
- Tremendous number of logistical and operational challenges if an operator was to use portable belts as a retro-fit solution (cleaning/maintenance, anchorage strength, suitability for coach seats of different designs, etc.)
- VTOC sees the product more along the lines of a consumer product, rather than an industry solution for a retro-fit
- Based on the presentation and with so many unanswered questions, at the present time, VTOC does not think it is appropriate for ABA to provide a grant to fund further their research and development

## 6) ADA

- Some operators will be challenged to meet the 2012 requirements due to current state of economy
- Need to clarify through Dept. of Justice and FMCSA if the second section on an overload scheduled service will be required to be accessible? (Guidance to industry is needed)

## 7) US DOT Motorcoach Safety Action Plan

The committee discussed the following recommendations in the plan that are vehicle-related:

- **Emergency Evacuation** – the notion of making the wheelchair lift access door an emergency exit (P. 35) is strongly endorsed by VTOC. Clear labeling and operating instructions (and interlocks to prevent use when coach is in motion) would have to be prescribed by FMCSA
- **Roof Crush** – one manufacturer indicated it would not be too onerous to meet a higher roof crush standard – no need for radical roof design as previously thought
- **Electronic Stability Control Systems** – VTOC supports ESC and it should be made mandatory on all new vehicles – The industry is already well out ahead of government on this issue
- **Crash Avoidance Warning Systems** – VTOC agrees this technology has the potential to reduce crashes and will have a place in newly manufactured coaches, however, once again the concern is over how to integrate all these different systems that use similar data so as to reduce cockpit clutter and to facilitate easy troubleshooting and maintenance (e.g. one central monitor with icons for controlling all the various devices and features)

- ***Data Collection and Analysis*** – VTOC supports the concept of having data recorders that can help in collision investigation. Safeguards must be in place to prevent unscrupulous operators from disconnecting or tampering with devices after a crash. It was noted that today's engines are 90% of the way there in respect to full collision data collection capability

## 8) Other Business

- ***Emissions*** – California and New Jersey are pressuring the industry to have older buses meet current new vehicle emission standards – through fleet averaging based on year of bus
  - Fleet average calculator tools available on the NJ website is similar to the calculator on CA Air Research Board website
  - Older engines are brought up to current standards using particulate filters and regeneration systems
  - NJ will pay for the emissions upgrade
- ***Proativity of Coach Industry Should be recognized*** – BISC and ABA should trumpet the advancements made by coach manufacturers in the industry's desire to be proactive when it comes to safety. In many cases, the industry is way out ahead of any government rulemaking and has implemented technologies before they become law, for example:
  - 3-point belts in new coaches
  - on-board fire detection and suppression systems
  - ESC
  - Data recorders
  - EOBR's
  - Tire pressure monitoring systems
  - Air disc brake systems
- ***CSA 2010 Demo*** – At the next BISC, Wes Barber will conduct an analysis of a carrier's performance to demonstrate how CSA 2010 works. It will show how data is collected and weighted according to severity and as a predictor of future events, and show how interventions are triggered at certain thresholds.