

Vehicle neglect, bad brakes to blame for limo crash that killed 20 in upstate NY

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October 22, 2019 | 8:14pm | Updated



The limo after the fatal crash.

NTSB

The horrific upstate crash that [killed 20](#) last October was the direct result of vehicle neglect and terrible brakes, according to details revealed in a new report.

The State Police and the Schoharie County District Attorney's Office ordered an independent review of the white stretch limo, a modified 2001 Ford Excursion tragically wrecked during the collision on Oct. 6, 2018.

[A total of 17 friends and family members](#) were celebrating a birthday party and hired 53-year-old Scott Lisinicchia of Prestige Limousine to drive.

But Lisinicchia blew through the stop sign at an intersection and into the parking lot of the Apple Barrel Country Store in the small town of Schoharie—killing himself, all passengers and two others in the lot.

“The multiple fatality motor vehicle crash...was the unfortunate result of catastrophic brake failure due too the neglect of mandated commercial vehicle inspections and maintenance by company personnel,” wrote motor vehicle forensic expert Brian Chase in the 83 report.

Chase placed “specific emphasis expressed regarding braking system component deficiencies of the vehicle,” noting the awful corrosion and depleted break pads made breaking dependent on the left and right front breaks only.

The report, although marked April 26, 2019, was newly released along with court documents filed by Schoharie County DA Susan Mallery in the **pending case** against Nauman Hussain, 29, who was running Prestige Limousine at the time of the accident.

He has been charged with criminally negligent homicide and manslaughter.

Hussain's attorney, Joe Tacopina, said the district attorney was trying to pin the blame on his client.

"The alleged cause of the crash — catastrophic brake failure — has been known for some time," Tacopina told The Post.

"A DOT specialist knew of that fact and condoned it. For that matter, that same DOT specialist personally inspected the limousine before the accident and failed to notify Mr. Hussain of any potential brake defects. Thus, any neglect here does not fall on Mr. Hussain."

An official report from the National Transportation Safety Board has yet to be released, but the agency did release a **safety recommendation analysis** released earlier this month which noted the victims could have survived if the seat belts had been properly worn—although the vehicle alterations made this next to impossible.

Lawmakers on both the state and national level have introduced **legislation** seeking to ramp up seat belt regulations.