

# Overheight trucks cost more than just fines



## Rt. 695 Bridge Collapse, Baltimore MD

June eighth 1999 was a blazingly hot and sticky spring day in Baltimore MD. reaching 97F / 35C degrees by mid-day. Paul McIntoch, of Brussels Ontario, loaded a 1999 Peterbilt lowboy, registered to T.T.K. Transportation Inc. of Ontario Canada , with a new Caterpillar excavator at the North Locust Point Marine Terminal in the Port of Baltimore . Permitted for over wide, he exited the port and headed West into rush-hour traffic. He made it barely 10 miles before tragedy struck. The Caterpillar was a big machine ten inches over width and with its boom incorrectly positioned, it was **nearly three feet Overheight**.

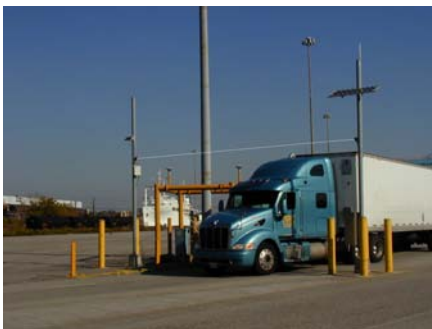
At 5:02 pm the first bridge McIntoch hit came crashing down. The Maiden Choice Footbridge was a concrete walkway over the Baltimore Beltway (Rt.695). The footbridge existed to allow school children to walk to the nearby Arbutus Middle School. Though passing inspection only two months earlier by the State Highway Administration, motorists said, "The truck appeared to lift the footbridge with the impact before it came crashing down". One after another, automobiles crashed into each other and the downed footbridge. Robert Norman Taylor was pronounced dead at the scene. Mr. Taylor's passenger, Regina Lee Brehon, was flown by helicopter to Shock Trauma along with two other motorists Elizabeth Freeman and Henri McQueen. Still, other motorists were treated at the scene. The second bridge McIntoch hit was the automobile overpass about 200 yards farther West which carries Westland Boulevard over Rt.695. McIntoch continued another 400 yards until stopping.

I've been told by my father, "That there is no such thing as an accident and poor planning leads to poor results", Both statements are true and both too cliché to be attached to an accident that causes so much pain and the loss of a man's life. The only just solution is action to stop a similar tragedy from happening again! TTK Transport and Services' insurance company settled out of court for a total of 2.6 million dollars in damages in July 2000.

The Maryland Port Authority (MPA) controls not only the North Locust Point Marine terminal, but all the ports around the City of Baltimore including; South Locust Point, Seagert Marine Terminal and Dundalk Marine Terminal . Mr. Rick Costello, of the MPA, call to ASTI Transportation Systems lead to the placement of 10 Safety Pass Overheight Protection Systems to protect all exits from the Port of Baltimore from such a tragedy.

ASTI's Safety Pass Overheight protection equipment consists of a infrared sender and receiver that are placed just high enough to see one another across the top of a correctly loaded tractor trailer. If the infrared beam is broken by the load, flashing strobe lights are lit and a warning buzzer is sounded in the guard booth ahead. If the load is Overheight, it is often only by an inch or so, in this case the driver by adjusting the air suspension can pass onto the road safely in a matter of moments, Dangerously loaded trailers can be reloaded without ever leaving the port.

Overheight vehicles crashes are almost always avoidable and cost more than just fines: crashed trailers, destroyed cargo, blocked roadways and increased insurance premiums means you are getting off cheap. All parties are sued when something goes this wrong and a clause that says a trucker must check his vehicle height is little protection when you are the one with the deep pockets.



Safety Pass overheight protection shown in operation, North Locust Point Marine Terminal & Dundalk Marine



**ASTI Transportation Systems can be reached at 302-328-3220  
for more information about the Safety Pass Overheight Protection System.**

