Several Safety Violations Eyed in Fatal Crash

A WorkSafeBC report into a crash of a 15-passenger van that left three farmworkers dead and 14 others injured in March 2007 has revealed several contributing safety violations.

The 15-passenger van was carrying 17 people, including the driver, when it collided with two transport trucks and overturned on Highway 1 in British Columbia’s Fraser Valley, east of Vancouver.

Factors identified in the crash include:

Overloading of the van, which caused it to be unstable. Poorly maintained tires. Only two seatbelts were available. The driver had the wrong class of driver’s license and was therefore not qualified to be driving that type of vehicle. Poor visibility. Extremely wet road conditions that caused the van to hydroplane.

The incident resulted in the BC government reinstituting random safety checks of vehicles used to transport farm workers. The Liberal government had discontinued that program in 2001 shortly after being elected.

WorkSafeBC says it is considering a penalty against the labour contractor who employed and transported workers to farms throughout the Fraser Valley.