Trucker Safety Fatality File



I-5 South Of Tumwater Reopens More Than 13 Hours After Fatal Semi-Truck Crash

A semi-truck crash south of Tumwater caused a backup of at least seven miles on southbound I-5 Monday. The highway was closed for more than 13 hours.

TACOMA, Wash ? All lanes of southbound Interstate 5 south of Tumwater reopened Monday night after being closed for hours following a deadly semi-truck crash.

Washington State Patrol (WSP) Trooper Robert Reyer said the semi-truck hit an overpass near milepost 97 and 113th Avenue SW. The driver of the semi-truck died at the scene. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) first reported the crash after 7:30 a.m. Monday.

The crash initially closed all southbound lanes of I-5. WSDOT crews were able to open one left lane around 9:50 a.m. and a second lane opened just before 12:15 p.m. All lanes reopened to traffic just before 9 p.m.

According to the WSP, the semi-truck hit the guardrail on the right shoulder of the highway, then struck the support pillar for the overpass.

The department tweeted around 10:15 a.m. that there was a seven-mile backup in the area due to the crash.

WSDOT crews diverted traffic to 93rd Avenue, where drivers could get back onto southbound I-5. Officials urged drivers to take Tilley Road to State Route 121 as an alternate route.

The WSP has not determined the cause of the crash but told KING 5 that investigators believe the driver of the semi-truck may have had a medical emergency or possibly fell asleep, causing the vehicle to drive off the roadway underneath the overpass.

In addition to the debris cleanup, Reyer said the vehicle was also leaking diesel fuel after the crash.

Officials with the department of transportation told KING 5 there was no obvious damage to the bridge. However, inspectors will take a closer look at the bridge for any damage.