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# U.S. probes bus defect that may have caused crashes

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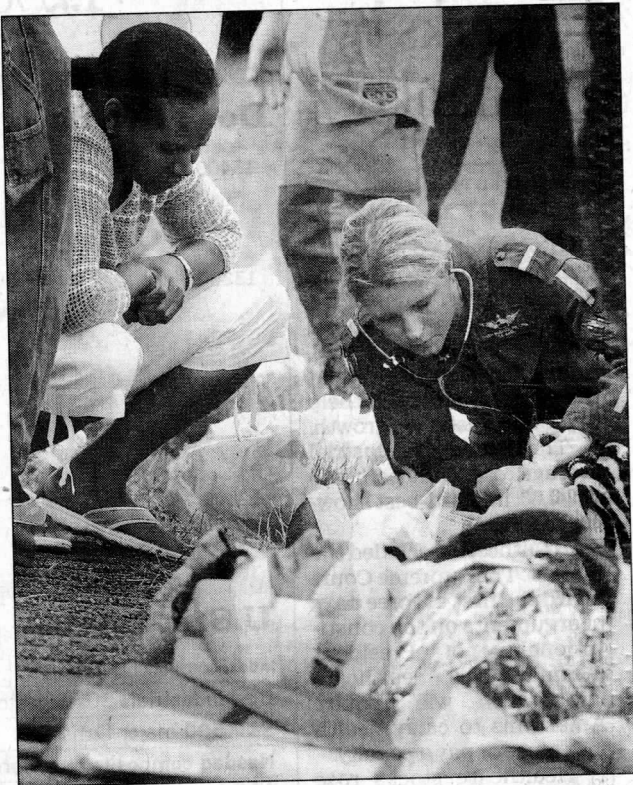
DETROIT — Federal safety regulators have begun investigating buses made by Motor Coach Industries Inc. over the last 20 years because the drive shafts can fall out and cause drivers to lose control.

The problem has led to two crashes that killed two people and injured 50 others, according to documents filed Monday on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's website. The probe covers an estimated 4,000 MCI D-Series buses with a steerable rear axle made from 1992 until this year.

MCI says on its website that it's the leading maker of intercity buses in the U.S. and Canada. The Schaumburg, Ill., company did not immediately comment.

The probe stems from a complaint filed with NHTSA by transportation company FirstGroup America, parent of Greyhound bus lines. The company said several drive shafts failed on MCI buses since March 2010, and the shafts were not held up by safety loops that are supposed to keep them in place. In two cases, drivers lost control of the buses, causing fatalities and injuries, the complaint said.

On March 16, 2010, an Americanos USA bus operated by Greyhound crashed on Interstate 37 near San Antonio, killing two and injuring 40 others. The Texas



BOB OWEN San Antonio Express-News

**A NURSE TENDS** to victims after a bus crash near San Antonio in March 2010. Investigators said the drive shaft probably broke before the bus flipped over.

Department of Public Safety said the drive shaft probably broke before the bus veered wildly and flipped over. It was carrying travelers to the Mexican border city of Matamoros.

A bus expert said at the time that drive shafts rarely break and completely fall off, but the shafts can snag on the pavement and turn a bus over.

Testing by FirstAmerica

found that the drive shafts can fall on the MCI buses and damage safety systems such as brake lines, NHTSA documents said.

NHTSA said it is looking into whether the buses have a safety defect. An investigation can lead to a safety recall, but no vehicles have been recalled yet. The safety agency said Monday that it will share its work when the investigation is done.