



[On I-65, Semi Truck and Church Van Crash Kills 11](#)

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It's Monday morning, and the news is still reaching many of us about the devastating I-65 big rig crash that killed 11 people — most of them, family members traveling from their home in Kentucky to a wedding in Iowa.

It was before sun-up last Friday: coming one way was the van, where its occupants were happily riding along the interstate in their Mennonite church's van, where victim [John Esh served as assistant pastor](#). Coming the opposite way on I-65, a fully-loaded tractor-trailer truck with a single occupant, the driver.

The deadly accident happened right around 5:30 a.m. (CST). The family had been on the road for [only 15 minutes](#). *Those who lost their lives in that church van on Friday morning were:*

- John Esh, his wife Sadie, and their children Anna, Rose, Rachel and Leroy.
- Leroy's wife, Naomi, and Leroy and Naomi's adopted son Jalen.
- Rachel Esh's fiance, Joel Gingrich, died with his future wife in the crash.
- Esh Family friend, Ashley Kramer, was also killed.

The truck driver, who hailed from Alabama, died as well. In fact, the [only survivors](#) of this horror are two young Esh children, aged 4 and 5. [Both were in car seats](#).

Another big rig crash that is deadly

[According to eyewitnesses](#), the tractor-trailer just crossed the median and entered oncoming traffic — [crashing head-on into the van](#) and causing the minivan to spin out of control. The big rig then slammed into a cliff, and the minivan came to rest on I-65, where traffic was block by the wreckage until late Friday afternoon.

There were [cable barriers](#) on that stretch of road — where I-65 turns into a two-lane roadway, a span of highway known to be dangerous — but those cables snapped like paper ribbons when the tractor-trailer ([loaded to capacity with auto parts](#)) plowed through the barrier. The cables were worthless in this accident.

What Caused This Tragedy? It's Too Soon to Know

Undoubtedly, federal and state investigations have already begun looking into the cause of this horrific big rig crash, which has essentially wiped out the John Esh family line. [Finger-pointing has already begun](#) on the deceased truck driver, and whether or not he just fell asleep at the wheel after being on the road too long (HOS regulations notwithstanding).

However, while grief and anger do fuel a desire for quick answers here, the truth of the matter is that this is known to be a dangerous stretch of road (others have died here in accidents, before this crash) and a great many variables exist in any trucking accident.

- Did that auto parts load suddenly shift, throwing that heavy monster over the median with the driver terrified and powerless?
- Did the brakes on that big rig fail?
- Was there a hazard on the road — a spill, a hole, a log?

Only time will tell the true story of what happened early last Friday morning on that Kentucky stretch of I-65. We need to wait and learn the facts, before justice can prevail.

In the meantime, our sincerest condolences to the family members and loved ones who are grieving their tremendous loss. Even in our position as trucking accident plaintiffs' attorneys, where we have been exposed to many a tragic big rig crash, we are shocked by this enormously heartwrenching, horrific event.