

Casino Could Face Liability Claim in Crash That Killed Charter Bus Passengers

A California casino could be held responsible for the deaths of more than a dozen casino customers following the crash of a charter bus with a questionable safety record, says Dallas bus crash lawyer **Frank Branson**.

Even though the bus involved in the California casino crash was owned and operated by an independent charter company, casinos have been held liable for passengers' safety based on incentives and control exercised over the charter company and scheduling of charter trips.

"Casinos depend on these charter buses to bring in business," says Branson in a post on the website of Androvett Legal Media & Marketing. "They negotiate with charter bus companies to receive the cheapest price and pay little attention to safety. The end result is poorly maintained buses and overworked drivers to transport patrons."

Branson's input comes after the deadliest bus crash in California in decades early Sunday morning near Palm Springs. A USA Holiday tour bus returning from the Red Earth Casino slammed into a tractor-trailer, killing 13 people – including the bus driver – and injuring 31 others.

"The speed of the bus was so significant that when it hit the back of the big rig...the trailer itself entered about 15 feet into the bus," according to the California Highway Patrol. There were no signs of the driver applying the brakes.

As the NTSB investigates the cause of the crash, early reports indicate the bus owner and operator had been sued twice for negligence involving previous crashes, including one that

killed three people.

In May of this year, Branson won a \$4.9 million judgment against the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma for the family of an 83-year-old woman killed in a 2013 casino charter bus crash.

“If casinos are going to charter the buses to bring gamblers, they should make sure the buses and drivers are safe,” says Branson.