

Troopers say teen admitted to smoking pot before crashing into school bus

By David Ham

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EVERETT, Wash. — Washington State Patrol says that an 18-year-old driver admitted to investigators that he had smoked pot before crashing into an empty school bus on State Road 99 in Everett Monday afternoon.

"People's action can be delayed and to not see a big yellow bus not blaming anybody in the Volvo at this time, but to not see a big yellow bus but who knows if that played a role; if being under the influence played a role in that or not," said Sgt. Bart Olson of the Washington State Patrol.

Troopers said a Volvo the 18-year-old was driving was making a left turn into the parking lot of a medical marijuana dispensary when it hit the school bus driven by an Edmonds School District Driver.

"Struck the vehicle kind of a t-bone pushed the Volvo off the highway which struck two parked cars and a fire hydrant," said Sgt.. Olson.

Troopers said the 18-year-old was rushed to Swedish Medical Center with head injuries. The front seat passenger, a 19-year-old female was taken to Harborview Medical Center with serious injuries.

An 18-year-old passenger was taken to Swedish Medical Center, and another 18-year-old passenger was taken to Harborview with in critical condition.

Troopers aren't sure if any of the passengers were under the influence.

The driver of the school bus, a 61-year-old man, was also taken to the hospital.

An Edmonds School District spokesperson said he was returning from dropping a student off, adding that he is a veteran driver with no traffic violations that she knows of.

"Our hearts just go out to all the families of everyone involved in the accident today," said DJ Jakala, Edmonds School District spokesperson.

Troopers say the school bus driver could also face charges for driving in a shoulder at the time of the crash.

The 18-year-old driver of the Volvo could face charges.

"He could face possible vehicular assault charges it's still under investigation that could be a possibility as well," said Sgt. Olson.

Troopers will request search warrants to check the teen driver's blood for drugs, and to search the Volvo.

"We observed a pipe in the vehicle although a search warrant will be obtained to get the pipe and check for other paraphernalia and other contraband," said Sgt. Olson.