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Two people were killed and at least 20 others were injured after a coach bus overturned and crossed over the median in a chain-reaction collision involving at least five vehicles late Monday night on the Long Island Expressway in Queens, authorities said.

The crash occurred at 11:45 p.m. near Greenpoint Avenue, Exit 16, in Maspeth.

All eastbound and westbound lanes of the expressway were reopened mid-morning after being closed for more than 10 hours for police investigation, the NYPD said.

The closures created a nightmare for morning rush-hour



The bus that was involved in the deadly crash on the Long Island Expressway on Monday night near Exit 16 in Maspeth.

commuters, with traffic cameras in the area showing diverted traffic at a standstill. The location is not far from the Queens side of Queens-Midtown Tunnel — a main artery into and out of Manhattan.

Police said the preliminary investigation showed a coach bus on the westbound LIE collided with another vehicle, which then collided with a third vehicle, causing the bus to strike the center median and flip over

into the eastbound lanes.

It then collided with two other vehicles.

Police said the bus driver and a passenger on the bus both died at the scene.

The driver of the fifth vehicle in the collision was transported to a hospital in critical condition, police said. Four others were seriously injured — two in critical condition, two in serious condition, the FDNY said.

The FDNY said of the 20 taken to hospitals, 15 were transported with minor injuries. It was not immediately clear Tuesday how many passengers were on the bus.

Police have not released the identities of the two people who died.

Michael Shenoda, a profes-

sor of traffic engineering at Farmingdale State College, told Newsday that while the so-called Jersey barrier concrete medians are generally well-suited to absorb and redirect impacts by passenger cars, they sometimes are not as effective with crashes involving vehicles with higher centers of gravity.

Shenoda said in addition to trucks and buses, late-model sport utility vehicles also were "more apt to tip over" when striking the barriers at high speed because they're taller than older passenger car models.

Although investigators have not said whether speed was a factor in the crash, the crash happened in an area that's a roughly half-mile straightaway section of road.