

One Person Dead and 25 Injured in 20-Car Pile-Up on Interstate 81

TULLY, N.Y., Sept. 2, 2024 – At 9:35 a.m. on Monday, Sept. 2, one person died and 25 people were injured in a 20-car pileup in Tully, New York. The accident was caused by flooding from severe thunderstorms the night before. 18-year-old Harold Mead of New York City was killed after a tractor-trailer lost control at mile marker 83 on Interstate 81 and smashed into his SUV. His girlfriend, 18-year-old Natalia Rojas, was also in the car, but she survived the crash.

Most of the people injured in the accident were treated nearby at Seraphim Hospital and released shortly after, but four remain in the hospital in serious condition, including the driver of the tractor-trailer, John Archibald.

42-year-old John Archibald was driving north when he hit a large puddle on an overpass under construction on Interstate 81, causing him to roll over and hit Harold Mead's SUV. The accident led to a 20-car pile-up, which tied up traffic for nearly three hours. NY state trooper Jerry Mariano said, "It was like a small lake on that overpass. Once the tractor-trailer went down, I don't think the rest of the cars had a chance. This is the worst pile-up I've seen in the last 20 years."

Severe thunderstorms and heavy rain from the night before caused flooding on the roads and ultimately lead to this tragedy. According to the New York State Department of Transportation, poor drainage due to the construction on Interstate 81 may have been a contributing factor to the severe flooding and therefore caused the pile-up.

Harold Mead was a freshman studying political science at Carlton State University. His girlfriend Carlton as well. Amy Wainwright, dean of student affairs at Carlton State, said "We're

saddened by the death of Harold. He and his girlfriend were on their way back to Carlton after visiting his family in New York City. Harold was well liked on our campus by both friends and faculty. He was studying political science and one day hoped to go into politics. We send our condolences to the Mead family and all of those impacted by this accident.”

By Brianna Kennedy