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Rte. 9 collision separates engine from vehicle, hospitalizes four

By: **Matt Rocheleau** | February 13, 2010 |

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A serious head-on collision on Route 9 in Hadley earlier this week separated the engine from one of the vehicles involved and hospitalized four people, including three who are believed to be University of Massachusetts students.

A Volkswagen Golf hatchback traveling eastbound on Rte. 9, or Russell Street, near the West Street intersection in Hadley crossed the center line and collided head on with a Ford F-350 pickup headed westbound on Tuesday at 7:21 a.m., police said. The hatchback's engine was detached from the vehicle during the collision and landed on Rte. 9, while the truck spun out of control, struck curb and flipped onto its roof, officials said.

"You don't see something like that too often," Hadley Police Chief Dennis Hukowicz said referring to the hatchback's dislodged engine. "It just shows you what kind of impact [the two vehicles] must have had."

The hatchback's driver, Maxwell Rudenstein, of Sharon, Mass., and the vehicle's two passengers, Jacob Gilbert, also of Sharon, and Charles Young, of Pepperell, Mass., were all sent to Cooley Dickinson Hospital in Northampton with non-life-threatening injuries, according to police. The three 21-year-olds are believed to be UMass students, according to names provided by police that match the names of students enrolled at the University; however that could not immediately be confirmed.

The pickup's driver, Dakota West, 18, of Hadley, was also sent to the Northampton hospital with non-life-threatening injuries, police said.

According to Hukowicz, Rudenstein told police he nodded off behind the wheel, which caused the hatchback to cross the center line into oncoming traffic.

Police referred questions regarding the condition of those involved to hospital officials who said on Friday afternoon they had no patient records for the four men, which likely means they have been released.

Drivers on Rte. 9 were temporarily rerouted after the accident, which remains under investigation, Hukowicz said.

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