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Eliot, Maine, fire and rescue workers respond to a head-on collision along Route 236 on Thursday. Photo by Jackie Ricciardi

Fatigue suspected cause of crash

By Joe Adler  
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ELIOT, Maine - The 18-year-old driver of a Mitsubishi Gallant involved in a head-on collision on Route 236 Thursday may have been asleep at the wheel, Police Chief Ted Short said Friday.

Roy Lohndorf, of South Berwick, was driving northbound at about 3:45 p.m. near Northern Pool and Spa when his car crossed the center line and struck a Dodge Dakota driven by 37-year-old Christopher Janes, of Kittery, police said.

Both drivers were seriously injured in the crash, but hospital officials Friday said that both had been upgraded to good condition.

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"There is some indication that (Lohndorf) may have been asleep based on the statement he gave," Short said.

However, the investigation shows no indication of drugs or alcohol, and charges are unlikely, Short added.

"If it's determined that the 18-year-old fell asleep, I doubt that he will be charged," the chief said.

Their vehicles both landed in the southbound shoulder, and rescue personnel had to use the Jaws of Life to extricate both drivers.

Authorities worked close to an hour to remove Lohndorf from his Mitsubishi Gallant and ultimately tore off the car's roof to free the driver.

Janes was rushed to Portsmouth Regional Hospital with serious injuries to his lower extremities and placed in surgery, officials said.

Hospital spokeswoman Nancy Notis said Friday that Janes' condition had been upgraded to good, but she would not comment on the details of his surgery.

Lohndorf was transported to Wentworth-Douglass Hospital in Dover, N.H., with leg injuries, said Short. His condition improved overnight from stable to good, according to nursing supervisors working at Wentworth-Douglass.

A helicopter had been called to airlift Lohndorf from the scene, but foggy conditions prevented a landing, said Short.

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