



NTSB 2015 MOST WANTED TRANSPORTATION SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

STRENGTHEN COMMERCIAL TRUCKING SAFETY

What is the issue?

Commercial trucking is integral to our economy, but crashes, injuries, and deaths involving commercial trucks have been increasing over the past several years. In 2012 alone, nearly 4,000 people were killed and more than 100,000 people were injured in truck crashes.

We rely on commercial trucks to deliver food and goods to our local grocery stores, medical supplies to our pharmacies and hospitals, and packages to our loved ones. But because of their sheer size, weight and physical properties, commercial trucks introduce a disproportionate hazard to passenger vehicle occupants in a crash.

The safety of the commercial trucking industry gained national media attention on June 7, 2014 when comedian Tracy Morgan was critically injured and another passenger died in a crash involving a commercial truck. The limousine bus in which they were traveling was struck by a truck-tractor and semitrailer combination vehicle.

While it was the uncommon involvement of a celebrity that focused attention on this crash, the commercial truck crashes are anything but rare. The NTSB is presently investigating a crash in which a tractor-trailer crossed a median and collided with a motorcoach in Orland, California, on April 10, 2014 that took 10 lives and injured 40 others. Also in 2014, the NTSB completed the investigation of the collapse of a span of the Skagit River Bridge in Mount Vernon, Washington, due to a high-load strike by a commercial truck. In addition, we completed our investigation into a truck-train collision in Rosedale, Maryland, resulting in the derailment of a freight train, a post-crash fire, and a subsequent explosion.

Improving the safety of truck operations will not only save lives, but improve the public's confidence in this vital, and visible, industry.



STRENGTHEN COMMERCIAL TRUCKING SAFETY



What can be done?

Commercial truck safety is a multifaceted issue involving the vehicles, the companies that operate them, the drivers, and the oversight agencies. Any successful effort to strengthen commercial trucking safety must be a collaborative effort.

The NTSB has a long history of calling on the regulators, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), to improve their oversight of operators, drivers, and vehicles. It starts with improving the system for determining a trucking company's safety compliance, including both driver and vehicle factors. Stronger oversight is needed to ensure that new carriers address any safety deficiencies in a timely fashion, and are swiftly placed out of service if they fail to improve. Furthermore regulators need a comprehensive system for ensuring that bad operators do not return to the industry under another name.

Regulators have taken initial steps by maintaining science-based hours of service rules and are in the process of rulemaking mandating electronic logging devices that can help assure that drivers are adequately rested. Other important rulemaking initiatives include requirements to screen drivers for obstructive sleep apnea, other potentially impairing medical conditions, and potentially impairing drugs.

To address vehicle factors, regulators must promote proper fleet maintenance and proven life-saving technology. Vehicle inspections should be required during compliance reviews, and vehicle safety equipment and technology, such as collision warning technology, tire pressure monitoring systems, rollover stability control systems, and lane departure warning systems, should be mandated across the entire industry. Regulators should also develop performance standards for front and side underride protection systems to improve highway vehicle crash compatibility with passenger vehicles.

Trucking is a diverse segment of the economy, and trucking companies range from thousands of trucks to single-truck owner operators. FMCSA and NHTSA regulations establish minimum requirements, not the gold standard. In recent crash investigations the NTSB has found that crashes happen even when an operator is doing everything "by the book." To manage their safety risks, trucking companies must go beyond securing regulatory compliance from all their employees, and proactively identify operational hazards and potential solutions.

Critical changes needed to reduce transportation accidents and save lives



for more information visit:
www.nts.gov/mostwanted

 @NTSB

 #NTSBMWL

NTSB on 

The NTSB's Most Wanted List highlights safety issues identified from the NTSB's accident investigations to increase awareness about the issues and recommended safety solutions.

The National Transportation Safety Board is an independent Federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant accidents in other modes of transportation - railroad, highway, marine and pipeline. The NTSB determines the probable cause of the accidents and issues safety recommendations aimed at preventing future accidents. In addition, the NTSB carries out special studies concerning transportation safety and coordinates the resources of the Federal Government and other organizations to provide assistance to victims and their family members impacted by major transportation disasters.

National Transportation Safety Board
490 L'Enfant Plaza S.W.
Washington, DC 20594

<http://www.nts.gov/mostwanted>
202-314-6000