

GAO  
Accountability • Integrity • Reliability

# Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-03-680](#), a report to Congressional Committees

## Why GAO Did This Study

From 1992 through 2001, more than 50,000 people were killed in crashes involving large commercial trucks. Although more than 6,800 of these fatalities were truck occupants, approximately 40,000 were passengers in other vehicles and more than 4,000 were nonmotorists. The Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) conducts a number of truck safety programs, including the Share the Road Safely program, whose goal is to educate the public about driving safely around large trucks. GAO examined (1) whether the program's initiatives are linked to this goal and (2) how FMCSA evaluates its Share the Road Safely program.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Department of Transportation (DOT) ensure that the Share the Road Safely program initiatives are directly linked to the program's goal and establish a systematic process for evaluating the effectiveness of the program. DOT generally agreed with our recommendations.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-680](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-680).

To view the full report, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Kate Siggerud (202)512-2834 or [siggerudk@gao.gov](mailto:siggerudk@gao.gov).

## TRUCK SAFETY

# Share the Road Safely Program Needs Better Evaluation of Its Initiatives

## What GAO Found

The Share the Road Safely program's goal is designed to educate the motoring public on how to share the road safely with commercial motor vehicles. To accomplish this goal, the program has undertaken a number of public education and information dissemination initiatives including a series of new initiatives beginning in 2000. Some initiatives, such as incorporating the program's messages into state driver education manuals or developing share the road messages specifically targeted to certain types of drivers, pedestrians or motorcyclists, are clearly linked to the program's goal. However, for a few other initiatives, such as directing program messages to elementary schoolchildren, the linkage is less clear. Research currently under way in the Department of Transportation may enable the program to link its initiatives to the most significant causes of truck/car crashes. Many highway safety experts agree that public education efforts to increase safe driving around large trucks are more likely to produce substantial changes in drivers' behaviors if they are combined with other safety initiatives, such as local law enforcement programs. Share the Road Safely has recently begun to pilot test such a program.

FMCSA evaluations of the Share the Road Safely program have provided some information about the program but have not convincingly demonstrated accomplishment of the program's intended outcomes: changes in drivers' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. FMCSA has the opportunity to adopt a new evaluation strategy for its recent initiatives, for example, by using evaluation practices adopted by other federally sponsored information dissemination programs to improve its evaluation of the program.

**Collision Involving Passenger Vehicles and Large Commercial Trucks**



Source: Georgia Department of Transportation.