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Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration



CMV SAFETY BELT NEWSLETTER

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Safety Belts and Commercial Drivers It's a No-Brainer

By David Golden



With truckers and the Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) industry becoming more intent upon implementing safety practices, it is clear that safety belt use is one of the biggest no-brainers ever. For insurers, the line could just as easily apply to safety belt use in any vehicle. The member insurers of the Property Casualty Insurers Association of America (PCI) know that using safety belts is simple, effective and within the control of every driver.

PCI members insure everything from large trucks to the new, ultra-small Smart Cars. Most of the time all of these vehicles safely share the road, but we know all too well what happens when vehicles collide, roll over, or have a close encounter with an immovable object. The laws of physics take over. Insurers see the unfortunate results every day. Whether it is a tractor-trailer, a box van or a passenger car, the human body suffers the most damage and too many people die.

Professional truck drivers instinctively know that most of the energy in a collision between an 80,000-pound tractor-trailer and a 3,000-pound passenger car will be transferred into the car. Unfortunately, too many truckers don't consider how crash forces will transfer to and through a 100-or 200-pound driver or even a 300-pound driver. That person will become a projectile and loses the protection built into the vehicle unless the driver uses something to keep his or her body in the protective cocoon of the vehicle: the safety belt.

They may be fairly low-tech, some might even call them "old school," but safety belts are still around because they work. Safety belts work so well that many other safety features of modern vehicles are built around their use:

air bags, safety cages, head restraints, even seats all protect best when the occupant is belted in.

For a number of reasons, drivers of large commercial trucks lagged far behind in safety belt use. Four years ago, less than half used safety belts, even though by law they were required. FMCSA created the CMV Safety Belt Partnership to combine communication and outreach abilities of government and industry. Government and business came together with a common goal to increase safety belt use by drivers of large commercial trucks. Since 2003, safety belt use by drivers of large trucks increased from just 48 percent to 72 percent. This achievement came at little cost to taxpayers and without any new government regulations!

PCI is proud to be a CMV Safety Belt Partnership member. Our member insurers work to help the trucking companies they insure become ever safer. "Be Ready. Be Buckled." is an example of government and businesses working together on a voluntary response to a highway safety need. To paraphrase an old saying, it's the biggest no-brainer in the history of trucks!

David Golden is Senior Director, Commercial Lines PCI's more than 1,000 insurance company members write 47 percent of commercial automobile insurance premiums in the U.S.

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Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance Operation Safe Driver Program



Each year approximately 40,000 people die on the roadways throughout North America – many of which are the direct result of unsafe and aggressive driving practices by both passenger and commercial motor vehicle drivers. Nearly 5,000 of them are related to large trucks and buses. As Safety Belt Partnership members and

professional truck drivers, you are all too familiar with these statistics. The Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) in partnership with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), state and local law enforcement, and industry launched a new campaign in 2007, appropriately titled Operation Safe Driver (OSD).

OSD is a selective traffic enforcement program that emphasizes CMV and non-CMV driver-focused enforcement in high crash corridors with high traffic volumes and concentrations of moving violations, driver infractions and aggressive driving behaviors. The program also includes outreach and education components. The program builds upon unique and innovative approaches such as TACT, Project ADVANCE, and Smooth Operator all of which have proven to be successful at combating the number of deaths in crashes involving large trucks and buses with passenger vehicles.

During this year's OSD campaign, participating law enforcement agencies focused on any number of areas including enforcement, education, and allocated resources throughout the week of October 18-24, 2009. CVSA expanded the program's educational activities to include seminars, webinars, podcasts, op-eds, paid media, training, a specialized "Teens & Trucks" Training Program (in collaboration with the Arizona Trucking Association, Arizona Department of Public Safety and American Trucking Associations), and a video PSA to complement existing outreach materials. CVSA encourages the industry to get actively involved in promoting positive and proactive driver safety messages not only during the OSD campaign but throughout the year.

"The campaign works because of the support it receives from FMCSA, state, provincial and local law enforcement, industry, associations and others, but we need more help to make it even more successful," said CVSA's Director of Policy & Programs Stephen A. Keppler. "Operation Safe Driver focuses enforcement resources on these high-risk operators and on problem behaviors by ALL drivers that contribute to large truck crashes, while at the same time offering educational tools to the motoring public at large, especially higher-risk segments, on how to drive more safely around trucks and buses."

To learn more about CVSA's Operation Safe Driver Program, please visit www.cvsa.org or www.operationsafedriver.com.

Promoting Commercial Vehicle Safety & Security

Roughly two million commercial motor vehicle inspections are conducted every year throughout North America by specially-trained individuals in each state to ensure trucks and buses driving on the highways are operating safely. Each day these roadside inspectors follow a certain set of criteria known as the North American Standard Inspection program developed by an organization that works to identify evaluate and monitor unsafe transportation practices as well as to develop and implement solutions for enhancing safety and security on our roadways. This organization is the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA).

Comprised of local, state, provincial, territorial and federal motor carrier safety officials and industry representatives from the United States, Canada, and Mexico, CVSA's members include people who work for various Departments of Transportation, Public Utility and Service Commissions, State Police, Highway Patrols and Ministries of Transport. In addition, CVSA has several hundred associate members who are committed to helping the Alliance achieve its goals; uniformity, compatibility and reciprocity of commercial vehicle inspections, and enforcement activities throughout North America by individuals dedicated to highway safety and security.

As an international, not-for-profit organization CVSA promotes commercial motor vehicle safety and security by providing leadership to enforcement, industry and policy makers. The Alliance conducts many safety events to educate industry and the general public about the importance of safe commercial vehicle operations and the roadside inspection program. Some of the educational outreach programs include Operation Safe Driver, Roadcheck, the North American Inspectors Championship (NAIC), the Cooperative Hazardous Materials Enforcement Development (COHMED) program, Operation Airbrake and Saved by the Belt. These programs yield positive results and reinforce the importance of federal, state and local enforcement partners working together to keep North America's roads safe and save lives. Data shows that on key measures of safety performance, such as driver and vehicle compliance with safety requirements and seat belt usage, the commercial motor carrier industry is demonstrating record improvements.

For more information about CVSA's programs or how to join, please visit www.cvsa.org.

Upcoming CMV Partnership Meetings
Tuesday, March 2, 2010
10am - Noon

MARCH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

International Registration Plan, Inc.
4301 Wilson Blvd., Suite 400
Arlington, VA 22203

Saved by the Belt

"This safety belt saved my life! I am lucky to be alive!"

These are comments we hear from drivers who are alive today from just wearing their safety belt. It's not luck, it's best practice.



CVSA recognizes Commercial motor Vehicle drivers (CMVD) annually whose lives are saved or injuries significantly reduced because they were wearing a safety belt at the time of a crash. This program emphasizes safety belt

use, increases public awareness, and uses the commercial motor vehicle driver as a role model for safety belt use. This year CVSA received eight nominations which were carefully reviewed by the Saved By the Belt Committee. In order for a CMVD to be considered they must meet the following guidelines:

- Any CMVD involved in a motor vehicle crash whose lives were saved or injuries significantly reduced because of the use of a safety belt.
- The crash occurred within twelve (12) months of nomination.
- Nominee must be using a safety belt in the proper manner.

In all crashes submitted to the Saved By the Belt Committee for review, the truck driver was not at fault which tells us that truck drivers are defensive drivers and are very aware of their surroundings.

One of the cases the committee reviewed involved the truck driver driving in a construction zone, traffic came to a stop and so did the driver. The driver looked in his side view mirror and noticed a dump truck coming up behind him very fast. He braced for the impact and was hit from behind. The impact was so great that the driver rear ended a pick-up truck in front of him causing a ladder that was on the pick-up truck to smash through the window narrowly missing the driver. The driver indicated that had he not been wearing his safety belt he would have shifted the couple of inches that would have caused the ladder to kill him and also probably have gone through the windshield. The important message that we can take away from this is that Safety Belts Save Lives!

Upcoming BRBB Newsletters

- Friday, January 15, 2010
Deadline for article submission(s):
Friday, December 18, 2009
- Friday, April 2, 2010
Deadline for article submission(s):
Friday, March 19, 2010

Please submit your articles, content suggestions and feedback to Martha.Threatt@dot.gov

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KIDS ART CONTEST

Tell us why it's important for bus and truck drivers to BUCKLE UP!

Draw, paint and create your own art to tell truck and bus drivers to use safety belts.

This Years Theme:
Be Ready. Be Buckled. Ready for the Road Ahead

PRIZES AWARDED FOR 2 DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

Contest begins 9/8/09
and ends 11/30/09
Grades K-6 Eligible

For Art Contest Rules and Regulations, please visit:
<http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safety-security/safety-belt/index.htm>
or email Martha.Threatt@dot.gov

