

**Prepared Remarks for Anne S. Ferro
FMCSA Administrator
International Association of Chiefs of Police
Division of State and Provincial Police Meeting
New Orleans, LA
Friday, March 15, 2013**

Introduction

Good morning, everyone. Thank you, **Colonel Edmonson** – for inviting me to talk about Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration’s safety goals – programs and initiatives – and more importantly how our collaboration with the state and provincial police are essential to achieving them.

I’m pleased to be here today with so many of North America’s finest law enforcement leaders. I value the important service you and your officers and troopers provide every day.

Our Chief Safety Officer and Assistant Administrator **Jack Van Steenburg** has been on hand throughout the meeting to encourage improved collaboration and coordination between us. As many of you know, Jack comes from your ranks, having served for many years in the New York State Police.

At DOT, our fundamental mission is to help Americans travel safely from one place to another. At FMCSA, it’s our responsibility to ensure that we fulfill the public's expectation of safe commercial drivers and operators on the roadways, every driver, every vehicle, every trip, every time.

Safety-First Mission

Three principles guide our enforcement strategies as we move people and products safely: raising the bar to enter the industry; requiring high standards to operate and removing high-risk carriers.

We need help from all of you to fulfill our safety mandate. FMCSA primarily deals with 11,000 U.S. law enforcement officers nation-wide engaged in our Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program called MCSAP.

While critical to our safety mission, those 11,000 officers are a drop in the bucket compared to the total population of U.S. law enforcement estimated at 800,000.

Simply put - we need more law enforcement officers who are conducting traffic enforcement to become engaged in removing unsafe commercial vehicle operators from our highways. When an officer or trooper observes a truck or bus operating unsafely – make traffic stops and issue a citation.

I can give a recent example of how your intervention can save lives.

A deadly trend has emerged in the Northeast – we are witnessing too many trucks and buses crashing into bridge overpasses. These trucks and bus drivers are not honoring bridge heights, causing crashes, death, destruction and even road congestion.

We want officers to write tickets to companies and drivers for operating on a restricted route. This is a serious safety violation and these drivers must be held accountable so that all drivers plan their routes with safety in mind and drive the safe route.

Safety-First Regulations

The motor carrier population is a large one. FMCSA regulates more than **500,000** trucking companies and **12,000** interstate bus companies. We oversee the drug and alcohol testing and fitness requirements for approximately **4 million** active CDL holders.

Our work makes a difference: truck-related fatalities dropped 28 percent between 2005 and 2011. But more needs to be done when 4,000 lives are lost in large truck and bus crashes each year.

This means that 10 people are killed and 241 people are injured in large truck crashes, EVERY SINGLE DAY.

At FMCSA, we know that we all must do more. We need your help to address safety issues that continue to claim lives.

When it comes to driver safety, we've taken swift action against an unprecedented number of unsafe bus companies; we continually reinforce our texting and cell phone bans; and we are implementing the final rule on our National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners and finalizing a notice of proposed rulemaking for a National Clearinghouse of Drug & Alcohol tests and refusals so that only responsible drivers are on the road.

A new hours-of-service rule takes effect on July 1. We are getting ready for it by educating law enforcement on the new driver requirements. The rule cuts the maximum allowable work hours for truck drivers from 82 to 70 hours per week, on average. It requires drivers to take at least one 30-minute break at a time of their choosing if they intend to drive later than the 8th hour after coming on duty.

The rule makes it clear that we will assess the maximum civil penalties allowed by law against drivers and companies that commit the most serious violations of the legal driving limits.

FMCSA's Compliance, Safety, Accountability – or CSA for short - continues to be an effective program and a positive change for safety. Since its nationwide rollout of CSA, in December 2010, violations per roadside inspection have decreased nearly 14 percent and driver violations

per inspection 17 percent, representing the most dramatic decrease in violation rates in a decade.

Still we must reach many more carriers to get a handle on their driver or equipment issues before a crash or violation occurs.

Motorcoach Safety Crackdown

FMCSA is committed to improving motorcoach safety. To do this, we need your help.

In February, Secretary LaHood called for a national safety crackdown on high-risk passenger carriers. In fact, **Mike Wagers**, Director of your S & P Division, came to the first meeting, showing support for our plans which include dispatching elite investigation teams to target high-risk motorcoach companies.

FMCSA investigators are undergoing specialized training and will conduct unique operations aimed at operating schedules, equipment storage, and driver qualifications. The first wave of a national safety sweep will take place in April.

FMCSA's safety personnel will coordinate with state law enforcement partners to target bus companies and conduct vehicle inspections.

In addition to these focused investigative activities, FMCSA is educating consumers and tour operators on the importance of researching the compliance and safety performance of a motorcoach companies before hiring them.

Partnership Examples

Our in-depth look at bus safety is uncovering new safety concerns. We may be reaching out to your officers for assistance on stopping unsafe intercity buses.

One of these areas includes passenger vans. We have found vans transporting passengers in for-hire transportation without any DOT markings or registrations. We have found vans that

have been improperly modified to accommodate additional passengers. In these cases, extra seats were added without including required safety belts and sometimes eliminating emergency exits from the vehicle.

In at least one situation, the carrier had passengers sit on folding chairs. Unfortunately, this was discovered only after a fatal crash.

We know of many stories of “run of the mill” traffic stops for failing to display a license plate or failing to stop for a posted stop sign resulting in major drug arrests.

In one recent search in Missouri, patrol officers found a false compartment in the truck and trailer containing bundles of marijuana.

Another routine traffic stop of a truck outside Las Vegas resulted in a drug trafficking arrest after officers found more than 450 pounds of cocaine. The driver was pulled over initially for driving erratically.

Unfortunately these cases happen more often than you would expect. The bottom line is this: we need all hands on deck to make that traffic stop when you see something potentially unsafe or suspicious.

IACP Role

Highly visible traffic enforcement is a crucial component to saving lives and preventing truck and bus crashes.

During the past two years, 34 percent of drivers of large trucks and buses involved in fatal crashes had at least one *driver-related* crash factor, and 4 percent of large trucks had at least one *vehicle-related* crash factor.

The most frequent driver-related factors included: speeding, distracted driving, impairments

such as fatigue and illness, and failures to stay in lane.

We are asking those of you here today as the leaders in traffic safety to help us spread the message that highly visible traffic enforcement is *critical*. There is no room for excuses when enforcing unsafe driver behaviors and serious CDL traffic offenses.

When you see a violation, issue a citation!

Human Trafficking

Finally, our partnership is critical to furthering another safety goal: human trafficking.

President Obama has made ending human trafficking a priority for his Administration.

And for good reason – human trafficking is modern day slavery. We may think that it is a crime of the past, but it is an epidemic plaguing us today. As many as 27 million men, women and children, many of them right here in our own cities and small communities are held against their will and trafficked into forced labor and prostitution.

We cannot let the American transportation system to be an enabler in these criminal acts. At DOT, we are taking action across all modes of transportation to stop the flow of human trafficking.

And now, I am calling on you to join the fight.

The bottom line is this: We are on the front lines and share a duty to watch for signs of human trafficking. When you see something, do something. You can save a life.

Working together, we can put a stop to human trafficking.

Conclusion

In closing, I want to thank all of you for your outstanding service to our country.

FMCSA appreciates all your hard work.

We have much work to do to keep our roads free of unsafe drivers, trucks and buses. Current crashes have shown once again that the job of protecting communities from unsafe trucks and buses is far from over.

With your help, we can leverage our resources, and stop unsafe trucks and buses from operating.

Your support is important to meeting the safety challenges on our nation's roads and highways.

Working together, we can use all our resources to make our roads safer for everyone.

I am happy to answer your questions. Thank you.

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