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Reviewing Accident Types- Rear Ending

The National Transportation Safety Administration stated in 06/2002:

“There are approximately 1.5 Million (~23% of all accidents) passenger vehicle, rear-end crashes per year resulting in approximately 2,000 (~4.5% of all traffic related deaths) deaths and approximately 950,000 injuries. “Economic Cost (is) \$18.3 Billion per year for passenger vehicles.”

Rear-end collisions are among the most costly of accidents even though the speed differential between the vehicles is usually minimal. When a truck is the offending vehicle, momentum greatly enhances the force of the impact. Being struck by an average delivery truck with only a 5 mph speed differential can be the equivalent of being struck by an average sedan with a speed differential of nearly 65 mph. Such impacts are expensive for the vehicle owner, but there are costs for the driver.

Rear-end collisions are plain evidence of following too closely, the latter being defined by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations as one of several serious violations. The FMCSR requires driver suspension for any two serious violations during any 36 months.

Virtually any accident of this class is preventable. This is especially true for a vehicle the size of a truck, which cannot easily be pushed into the vehicle in front of them. Completion of pre-trip inspections, required by statute, removes brake failure as a realistic possibility.

Proper diet, good physical conditioning and adequate rest promote driver alertness. Avoiding distractions from daydreaming or concentrated thought, intense or animated conversations, interaction with radio or music players, or off-road stimuli allows proper scanning. A thorough awareness of the surrounding environment lets the driver maintain adequate following distance which, combined with driving at a speed appropriate for the conditions, removes most opportunity for such an incident.

A proper distance must be maintained from the vehicle in front even while not moving. That space will allow the front vehicle to roll slightly backwards without infringing on your space. It will also allow you to pull around that vehicle if it is incapable of continuing. Remember that the green traffic light means, “Proceed when clear.” Do not anticipate another driver’s actions... wait until the vehicle is clearly moving before you start, and once moving, remember to maintain adequate following distance, including allowance for tailgaters.

The stopping distance required by a truck increases the opportunity for rear-end collisions if the driver does not faithfully employ all of the available defensive driving techniques. Even a minor collision will cost the driver delay, inconvenience, and stress, and may result in disciplinary action by the employer for involvement in a preventable accident. Should the accompanying citation be the second serious violation in 3 years the driver will lose his driving privileges for 60 days.

Resources and References

Publications

National Safety Council, Motor Fleet Safety Manual (4th ED)

A publication that is probably the most widely recognized text on general fleet safety

JJ Keller, Fleet Safety Compliance Manual, This is a comprehensive guide to fleet safety.

Web Sites

<http://www.autoaccidenthelpline.com/RearEnd.html>

An interesting, if general article on rear-end collisions.

[http://www.nts.gov/Recs/letters/2001/H01_06_08.pdf - search='preventing%20rear%20end%20collis](http://www.nts.gov/Recs/letters/2001/H01_06_08.pdf-search='preventing%20rear%20end%20collis)

A very detailed study by the NTSB of nine cases involving rear end accidents.

National Safety Council

<http://www.nsc.org/staticprod/books.cfm>

This is the publications site for the NSC and shows many resources for fleet safety.

National Highway Transportation Safety Administration

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/>

This should be your first stop when looking for assistance in fleet safety. It provides statistics, brochures, posters, and topical and seasonal promotions.

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

<http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/>

The FMCSA is focused on reducing crashes, injuries and fatalities involving large trucks and buses. This site includes reports on companies' safety records, safety materials and statistics.

Federal Department of Labor (OSHA)

http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/trucking_industry/index.html

Federal DOL site with a good selection of links to other government sites related to fleet safety.

JJ Keller

http://www.jjkeller.com/browse/product.html?group_id=1799&action_code=90983

JJ Keller is widely considered one of the primary sources in DOT compliance and fleet safety.

http://www.business.com/directory/transportation_and_logistics/trucking/fleet_management/fleet_safety/

A list of commercial vendors for materials and services related to fleet safety.

Videos

<http://www.nrsc.com/>

Requires a subscription for access to many safety videos including:

City Driving #C155, Distracted Driving #D167, The Moment of Impact #T161

These videos may be requested through your agent or directly from

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