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Heavy Truck Accidents and Unnecessary Deaths and Serious Injuries

By <http://www.monheit.com/truck/20041205102621.html>

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How common are injuries from heavy truck accidents?

An accident involving a heavy truck, 18-wheeler, semi, big tractor-trailer truck, often results in death or serious injury. The statistics are shocking. Over 1 million people were involved in nearly 500,000 large truck related accidents in 1999. That resulted in over 5,000 deaths and over 140,000 injuries. Of those injuries from heavy truck accidents, 10's of thousands involved severe brain damage or the loss of limb. Some trucks weigh over 100,000 lbs when fully loaded. Unloaded, they still weigh over 10,000 lbs. That is 5-10 times the weight of a car.

This problem of heavy truck accidents has been around for years, and the data is consistent over time. For example, according to the Safety Board analysis of Fatal Accident Reporting System (FARS), in 1993 there were 3,311 heavy trucks involved in 3,169 fatal accidents, in which 3,783 persons died. The FARS report shows that heavy truck accidents are often caused by truckdriver fatigue. In fact, as many as 30 to 40 percent of all heavy truck accidents are caused by fatigue of the driver.

What is the cost to society of heavy truck accidents?

Injuries and fatalities are not the only toll inflicted by heavy truck crashes. For example, the financial toll that goes along with such crashes impacts commerce, costs of insurance, costs of health care, and costs of good. The NTSB reports that the actual cost of all heavy truck accidents in 1999 was \$34 billion.

What is the most likely cause of heavy truck accidents?

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The NTSB said, "Because of the significant number of heavy truck–related fatalities and the significant role of fatigue in such accidents, the Board initiated this study of single–vehicle heavy truck accidents to examine the role of specific factors, such as drivers' patterns of duty and sleep, in fatigue–related heavy truck accidents and to determine potential remedial actions. The purpose of the Board's study was to examine the factors that affect driver fatigue and not the statistical incidence of fatigue. Therefore, the Board specifically selected truck accidents that were likely to include fatigue–related accidents; that is, single–vehicle accidents that tend to occur at night. The Board desired to obtain approximately an equal number of fatigue–related and nonfatigue–related accidents through its notification process."

The most common causes of heavy trucks accidents are:

speeding,
running off the road

travel out lane
failure to yield

But at the root of those causes of heavy truck accidents is often driver fatigue.

"The Safety Board investigated 113 single–vehicle heavy truck accidents in which the driver survived. However, because the 96–hour duty/sleep history that was required for the study was not available for 6 drivers, the 6 accidents in which these drivers were involved were not included in the study. The study, therefore, analyzes data from 107 single–vehicle heavy truck accidents."

Based on the results of the analysis, the NTSB determined that fatigue is a key factor in heavy truck accidents, that hours of service regulations are a key to preventing heavy truck accidents, that improved education of heavy–truck drivers is important in implementing improved safety about fatigue,

How is the cause of a heavy truck accident determined?

Inspect the heavy truck including mechanics, tires, brakes
Interview witnesses
Review police reports
Obtain weather report and determine driving conditions

What to do if you were in a heavy truck accident?

When a person is injured or killed in a heavy truck accident they may be able to hold the driver and heavy trucking company responsible, as well as the companies on whose behalf a delivery is being made. The damages may include:

Wrongful death
Physical pain and suffering, mental anguish and physical impairment;
Medical and hospital expenses
Wage loss and lost earning capacity

Online Resources about Truck Accident Litigation

By Michael Monheit, Esquire, Monheit Law, PC

Here is a list of helpful links related to truck accidents and the resources to research truck accident related data.

Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) Web-Based Encyclopedia

Comprehensive site offering a wealth of knowledge based on breakdown of truck related accidents, cause of truck accidents, and injuries/death categorized by state and year.

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

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Part of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), NHTSA is a federal agency for the prevention and control of motor vehicle and truck related death and injury. NHTSA's mission is to save lives, prevent injuries, and reduce traffic-related health care and other economic costs. <http://www.nhtsa.gov>

Hotline to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Here's the handy page and toll-free number to file a vehicle safety defect report, learn about the process of car and truck recalls, and search the database of consumer complaints related to car and truck accidents.

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

Child Passenger Safety Tips from National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Buckle up for child passenger safety. Use this chart for the good, bad, and better options available in the marketplace today.

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

Statistics for Car Accidents

There were an estimated 6,356,000 car accidents in the US in 2000. Get the breakdown of how and why.

<http://www.car-accidents.com/pages/stats.html>

National Center for Statistics and Analysis

A division of National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, NCSA provides truck accidents and traffic safety reports, high profile cases, and data sheets.

<http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/departments/nrd-30/ncsa/AvailInf.html>

Bureau of Transportation Statistics

Comprehensive site for all things related to transportation in the U.S.

<http://www.bts.gov/>

University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute Center for National Bus and Truck Statistics

Collects and analyzes truck and bus accidents and related travel data

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<http://www.umtri.umich.edu/cntbs/>

Safety and Fitness Electric Records System (SAFERS)

A division of FMCSA (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration) — SAFERS offers truck company safety data and related services to the industry and the public over the Internet.

<http://www.safersys.org/>

Legal Sources: Trucking Accidents

Materials provided courtesey of Jim Ronca, Esq. jronca@srklaw.com

Truck Accident Resources for Lawyers

Truck Accident Lawyers Across the USA

A list of personal injury law firms in the USA who handle complex tort cases.

State by State Law Firm List

Additional Articles about Truck Accidents and Safety

News and other articles about truck safety and truck accidents.

Additional Truck Articles

Latest Truck Accident News

Online truck accident news stories.

Related News: Truck Accidents

Latest Truck Accident News

Statistics

Truck Accidents Stats

Pennsylvania Driver and Vehicle Services

Everything you need to know about applying for a driver's license, titling, and registration in PA.

<http://www.dmv.state.pa.us/>

Online Resources about Truck Accident Litigation

Frequently Asked Truck Accident Questions

Tractor Trailer Truck Driver Fatigue

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU GET INTO AN ACCIDENT

Motorcycle Accident Claim – Your Compensation!

Free List Pro

62 Ways To Beat The Gas Pump Monster

Cure Bad Breath

Speaking in Tongues – explained!!

The Ultimate Ad Tracking Tool



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