

**National Private Truck Council
Monthly Driver Safety Letter – July 2006**

Making a Difference – One Driver at a Time!

Have you ever thought about how much influence you can have as a group? I mean “YOU” as defined by the title *Professional Driver*. There are 3.24 million of you out of a US population of 300 million. Only a little over 1% you say. Not enough to make a difference. I beg to differ. What about all of the people you come in contact with – your “Sphere of influence?” If you include family, friends, and others you “touch;” I’m thinking 10 per driver is still an underestimate. Now we’re over 10% of the US population. And, how many of the 300 million are drivers and potential drivers? If you subtract the elderly who have turned in their keys and the very young who can’t yet understand, maybe we’re down to 150 million. So, don’t you think that if you could influence 20% of the driving and soon to be driving public, you could start to make a difference? You bet you could!

By this time, you are probably asking yourself: “why is the “Safety Guy” going through this drill?” Well, I am reacting to the CVSA RoadCheck 2006 results which were recently published. And, specifically, I am talking about the safety belt violations. Before your eyes glaze over, understand that I am going to continue to preach safety belt use until it looks like **you’re** at 100%. Notice I said “**you’re**.” Normally I say “we” because we’re all in this together, but, when it comes to safety belt use, I’m a 100% kind of guy, but I’m not so sure about you. I know I’m dating myself, but my first car didn’t have safety belts until I installed them myself. It has always been important to me. Then, I almost lost a close friend who was saved by his belt in a rollover accident. I also worked for a company where several drivers were killed and several had to be fired before we got serious about safety belt use. I can proudly say that today that company’s drivers are still 100%. Can you say that about your company and, if not, what are you going to do about it?

The overall CVSA statistics showed that there were 1,223 safety belt violations out of 60,357 inspections or a 2% violation rate. But before you start patting yourself and your fellow drivers on the back, you should know that one jurisdiction reported a 21% violation rate. Was this just a fluke or was it because in that area for 4 hours on each of the 3 days of RoadCheck 2006 they conducted **only** safety belt enforcement? I hope I’m wrong but I think there is still a lot of work to be done to get even close to 100%. Here is where you can help. Use your influence to encourage, coerce, and force (if they are in your vehicle) others to wear their safety belts. You don’t ever want to be that professional driver who said to me about his co-driver who was killed when ejected, “I knew he didn’t like to wear his seatbelt. I just wish I had said something while he was still alive.” You alone can make a difference and, as part of a group of 3.24 million, you can make a **big** difference! If you need help, take a look at the resources on the Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Belt Partnership Web page: www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safetybelt.

One final note, National Truck Driver Appreciation Week this year is August 20-26. I’ll say more next month, but know that you are appreciated by me, others like me, your families, and your company. I hope your company participates but, even if they don’t, just know that most of us realize that this world as we know it couldn’t exist without you and the goods you pick up and deliver. Make safety part of your personal culture and thanks for the job you do.

Be Ready. Be Buckled. Make a Difference!

Bob I
The “Safety Guy”
(If you have suggestions for future Safety Letters, please let your Supervisor know.)

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