



## Task 24-2: Recommendations on CMV Crash Incidences and Seat Belt Usage

*FMCSA asks its Motor Carrier Safety Advisory Committee (MCSAC) to review commercial motor vehicle (CMV) crash data trends and seat belt usage to determine what efforts are achieving the best results in furthering the decline in CMV crashes and increasing seat belt usage by truck and motorcoach drivers.*

### I. Discussion of Task 24-2 and Comments on Presentation on Crash Data

#### A. Factors contributing to an increase in fatal CMV crashes in recent years.

1. Driver distraction.
  - a. Drivers often use social media while driving, including to watch and post videos.
  - b. Distracted drivers contribute to an increase in CMV rear-end crashes.
2. CMV driver fatigue contributes to driver distraction.
3. Lack of seatbelt use by CMV drivers accounts for a large share of fatalities.
  - a. Drivers may not believe seatbelts increase safety or find them difficult to fasten, too small, or uncomfortable to wear.
  - b. CMV sleeper berths may not have a seatbelt, or a passenger may not use it.
  - c. Some drivers believe erroneously that using a seatbelt will prevent them from exiting a vehicle in an emergency.
  - d. Drivers in retail and agricultural industries may find seatbelts inconvenient since they enter and leave their seats regularly.
  - e. Some drivers believe a seatbelt is unnecessary if they drive safely.
  - f. CMV drivers may use seatbelts less regularly than drivers in the construction industry and drivers of passenger cars.
4. Aggressive driving and 'road rage'.
  - a. Non-CMV drivers behave more aggressively around CMVs. Some drivers cut off, swerve around, or brake in front of CMVs obeying the speed limit, which an aggressive driver perceives as too slow.
  - b. Crash reports provide evidence of this trend, though there is limited data on passenger vehicles that cause CMV crashes.
  - c. Aggressive passenger vehicle drivers may trigger aggressive CMV driver behavior.
  - d. Aggressive driving increased during the pandemic and has not yet declined.
5. Speeding.
  - a. Exceeding the speed limit is the most important driver-related factor for large vehicles involved in fatal crashes.
  - b. Speeding is especially dangerous in work zones, where large trucks are involved in almost a third of fatal crashes.
6. Interaction with vulnerable road users, including pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists. Pedestrian fatalities in crashes with large trucks rose to a record high in 2021 and remain high.

#### B. Strategies to reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities involving CMVs.

1. Public outreach campaigns on the dangers of distracted driving.
  - a. Tailor messaging to audiences including the generation of young drivers who post live on social media while behind the wheel.
  - b. An outreach campaign in Kentucky compared distracted driving with drunk driving.
2. Public outreach campaigns on how seatbelts save lives and reduce injuries.
  - a. Tailor messaging to specific types of drivers and/or employers, such as food truck companies or other online retailers. A door-to-door delivery driver and a freight driver may have different reasons for not wearing a seatbelt.
  - b. Leverage social media platforms used by drivers.

- c. Feature CMV drivers talking about why they wear a seatbelt, including drivers who are social media influencers. Drivers are more likely to take advice from their peers than from the government.
  - d. Show how easy it is to unfasten a seatbelt.
  - e. Use video from real crashes to demonstrate the effect of a crash on drivers and passengers. A driver without a seatbelt may be thrown around the cab, thrown into another passenger in the cab, or thrown from the truck.
  - f. Show drivers the error of seeing themselves as not hurting anyone if they do not wear a seatbelt.
    - i. Show the effects of driver injuries on a driver's family, including how a family deals with the aftermath of a serious accident.
    - ii. Show drivers that a seatbelt helps them maintain control of a CMV, just as it does for professional race car drivers in the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR). Since NASCAR is popular among CMV drivers, NASCAR-related messaging may be useful in a campaign.
    - iii. Show that a crash scene takes longer to clear when a driver is thrown from a vehicle. The delay may lead to safety hazards for other drivers.
  - g. Address drivers who believe they do not have to wear a seatbelt since they drive safely. They may not consider the possibility of a crash caused by another driver.
  - h. Showing drivers how seatbelt extenders enable a larger driver to fasten a seatbelt easily and comfortably may increase seatbelt usage.
  - i. Remind drivers of the basic tenets of safe driving and seatbelt rules.
    - i. CMV passengers in the front seat by law must wear a seatbelt.
    - ii. CMV passengers in a bunk should have a restraint available.
  - j. Leverage existing outreach campaigns, including FMCSA's Operation Safe Drive.
  - k. Australian campaigns may offer effective examples of outreach.
- 3. Increase enforcement of seatbelt use.
  - 4. Leverage technology to increase safety, such as Advanced Driving Assistance Systems (ADAS), which include technologies such as automatic braking, adaptive cruise control, lane departure notifications, and cameras that increase driver situational awareness.
    - a. Data from Europe shows a significant improvement in safety associated with these technologies. While differences exist between CMV driving conditions in Europe and the U.S., the results should be similar.
    - b. FMCSA has conducted research on CMV ADAS. Some drivers may have concerns that ADAS might be unsafe when driving on ice and because of shifting cargo.
    - c. Intelligent speed assistance technologies may help reduce speeding by using geofences to set the vehicle's maximum speed.
    - d. Passenger vehicles such as pickups often do not allow a driver to put the vehicle in gear unless the driver and passengers have put on their seatbelts.

## II. Recommendations

- A. FMCSA should prioritize a seatbelt safety campaign tailored to CMV driver audiences. FMCSA should create a new campaign and/or leverage existing safety campaigns or compliance-related events, such as the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliances' International Roadcheck, and FMCSA's annual Safety Belt Awareness campaign.
- B. FMCSA should prioritize a safety campaign to reduce distracted driving.
- C. FMCSA should continue to support states emphasizing work zone safety to decrease crash rates.

### **III. Suggested Data Requests and Presentation Topics**

- A. The impact of assistive technology and industry trends on CMV safety, including Advanced Driving Assistance Systems, and the percentage of fleets that use technologies like lane departure notifications, cameras that increase visibility for drivers, automatic braking, and adaptive cruise control.
- B. Intelligent speed assistance technologies, especially New York City's program.
- C. Geographic locations where crashes or fatalities have declined the most.
- D. Seatbelt usage by CMV drivers, especially categories that do not typically use seatbelts.
- E. Effective seatbelt outreach campaigns and ways to extend their reach.
- F. Insight of behavioral experts into ways to improve driver safety.
- G. The share of Class 3 truck drivers who fall under FMCSA's jurisdiction and state enforcement of these vehicles.
- H. Data about the role of passenger vehicle drivers in fatal CMV crashes.