

# GUARDIAN

A Publication of the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance

Volume 32, Issue 2  
2nd Quarter 2025

## NORTH AMERICAN **C**!RGO THEFT *Trends, Case Studies and Prevention*

*Best Practices for a Better Tomorrow*



**How Do You Know  
You've Been Exposed  
to Radiation?**

**Keeping Highways Safer for  
Trucks and Other Motorists  
During Winter Storms**

**Transport Canada's  
Driver Distraction  
Mitigation Program**

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#### GUARDIAN

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Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance



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CVSA is looking for interesting, relevant content for its quarterly magazine. We would be happy to consider your news, ideas, insights and articles on issues facing the commercial motor vehicle safety community for upcoming editions of "Guardian" magazine.

**The deadlines for upcoming editions are available at [www.cvsa.org/guardian-magazine/deadlines-for-submissions](http://www.cvsa.org/guardian-magazine/deadlines-for-submissions).**

**Questions?** Please contact CVSA Writer-Editor Emily Moorhead at [emily.moorhead@cvsa.org](mailto:emily.moorhead@cvsa.org).



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## Does What We Do Make a Difference?

By **Capt. John Hahn**, Motor Carrier Safety Section, Colorado State Patrol; CVSA President

If you have been in the enforcement community for more than a day, you have probably wondered at times if what you are doing on a daily basis makes any difference. I have always had a firm sense of the value of what we do for a living. From the beginning, I felt that law enforcement generally was critically important work that made our communities and our roads safer. That belief in the importance of the profession was the reason I got into this line of work to begin with. If we were to poll the members of our organization, I would be willing to bet that many would say the same thing.

That said, it would also be disingenuous to tell you that I have never wondered if what I was doing on an individual level made any difference. I again think back to my time as a new, young state trooper out doing the work, and I can recall times when I would finish with a traffic stop and wonder if my actions would have any long-term impact on that individual changing their poor driving behavior. I had to believe it would, but there were times when I would wonder. Again, if you were to ask our members if they ever had that same thought at some point in their career, my sense is that they have all felt that same way at one time or another. So, how is what we do in commercial motor vehicle (CMV) safety any different? Is it different? Do we make a difference?

Approximately 4 million CMV inspections are conducted every year across North America. That is 4 million times where a highly trained member of the enforcement community interacts with industry, with the sole focus of ensuring safety. When we think about the term enforcement, we so often think in terms of violations on an inspection report, citations and out-of-service orders. In fact, according to Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) data, inspectors discover approximately 5 million violations every year (in the U.S. alone!), with just over 900,000 of them being out-of-service violations. These valuable inspections drive so much of what we also do related to compliance reviews and other interventions, all intending to hold drivers and carriers accountable for their safety performance. In so many other arenas of the enforcement profession, this would be where our responsibilities end. The enforcement action happens, and we are off to the next one. But such is not the case in our world.



***Our inspectors interact with industry over 3,500 times a day where the outcome is industry being caught in the act of operating safely.***

As I spend time looking at our data in Colorado, keeping an eye on things like inspection totals, violation rates, out-of-service rates and the like, I also pay a great deal of attention to another, all-too-important number: violation-free – or “clean” – inspections. Again, looking at FMCSA data for U.S. inspections since 2021, our inspectors complete nearly 1.3 million inspections every year where there are no violations. For U.S. inspections on Canadian- and Mexican-domiciled carriers, the number of clean inspections collectively averages over 75,000 per year. To put this another way, our inspectors interact with industry over 3,500 times a day where the outcome is industry being caught in the act of operating safely.

It is hard to think of another place in the enforcement profession where an official action taken by an officer serves to catch a regulated community in the act of “doing it right.” Imagine an officer pulling over a regular vehicle and recognizing an individual for doing well. And not only recognizing them but doing so in a meaningful way that would benefit them or their family in the same way that a clean inspection benefits a driver or a carrier.

Right now, as you read this article, our members are out doing the work. In every corner of this continent we call home, from the coast of California and the wild landscape of the Yukon to Florida and Maine, in the farmlands of Iowa and Saskatchewan to the heart of Mexico, individuals are interacting with the drivers and the companies that make our economies thrive. During every hour of the day and on every day of the week, our members find themselves under a truck, giving it “just one more look.” They are working in a scale house helping ensure our infrastructure

will remain sound or taking the extra moment to recall their human trafficking prevention training to make the outreach or the phone call that will help lead to healing and change a victim's life forever.

If that is not enough evidence, we need look no further than the fatal crash data to provide us with the rest of the story. Transport Canada reported that the annual number of fatalities in CMVs dropped by over 14% in the decade from 2012 to 2021. In the U.S., in 2022, there were 6,204 fatalities as a result of a crash involving a CMV. In 2024, that number was 4,743. That is a difference of 1,461. This equates to 1,461 fewer lives lost. That number represents 1,461 first dates, high school graduations, little league games attended, anniversaries celebrated and dads walking their daughters down the aisle that would not have happened if not for something being done.

Like anyone, I cannot attribute these numbers solely to the work that our members do. Frankly, there are likely a lot of reasons for those decreases. No doubt technology, vehicle design and improved safety systems in our vehicles played a role in these successes. But it is also no secret and no mistake that those individuals who seek to innovate and write the next chapter of safety technology are also a valued part of this membership.

So, if you are an inspector or a data analyst, a driver or a safety manager, a staff member of this organization, an instructor, a supervisor, or one of our many partners, and whether you are new here or have been a part of this community for a long time, please don't ever question whether or not your efforts make a difference. They do. And there are quite literally thousands of reasons why they do. Thank you. ■



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

## Advancing Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety

By **Collin B. Mooney**, MPA, CAE, Executive Director, Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance

The construction of the interstate highway system in the U.S. opened the door to trucking as a primary means for moving cargo throughout the country. Similar national highway networks in Canada and Mexico have made trucking and bus transportation more attractive throughout North America. As a result of this continued growth, today's safety in commercial motor vehicle (CMV) transportation continues to pose a complex challenge.

Founded in the early 1980s, CVSA has established itself as a significant factor in developing safety standards and practices for the motor carrier industry. The Alliance's committees and programs provide this structured approach to facilitate discussion and to design and implement effective safety practices and programs, all in pursuit of a safer transportation network.

Over the past 35 years, the Alliance has grown to international proportions and is recognized by governments and industry as a catalyst for bringing together the various interests needed to establish and enforce CMV safety laws, regulations, standards and practices. The Alliance serves as the focal point for gathering the key players to address the major issues that affect CMV safety – a unique and challenging concept involving the regulators and the regulated.

As the melting pot for truck and bus safety issues, the Alliance continues to be well

positioned to continue its leadership role in helping member jurisdictions, the enforcement community and the CMV industry develop vehicle maintenance and compliance standards, operating policy, inspection procedures, training programs, data collection efforts, and applicable laws and regulations to ensure safe and efficient movement of people, commercial products and hazardous materials/dangerous goods. To do this, the Alliance has evolved over the years from a project- or task-driven organization to a more strategic approach that anticipates areas of need, develops strategies to address those needs and targets specific resources for those needs.

Because of the breadth and depth of our membership and our strategic partnership with a variety of industry stakeholders, the organization has demonstrated that it can be the dominant agent for bringing together all interested parties engaged in CMV safety. CVSA's foundation is rooted in the North American Standard Inspection Program, which continues to be the Alliance's most successful roadside inspection and enforcement initiative. This program alone indicates how influential the Alliance is and the extent to which its programs can solidify the enforcement community and industry interests around effective safety programs that benefit the safety of both industry and the public.

Over the years, CVSA has structured its operations to expand its leadership role and

help its membership in several ways:

- ✓ Adapting emerging technology to safety improvements in a rapidly changing transportation environment
- ✓ Leveraging scarce resources to develop safety improvements and developing consensus around their application
- ✓ Serving as the focal point for resolving issues that affect both enforcement and efficiency
- ✓ Providing a voice to make the public aware of the contribution of the CMV industry and its commitment to the safe transportation of people and cargo
- ✓ Leading the way in setting international standards and supporting international compliance with motor carrier laws and regulations

As organizations evolve, the Alliance must be designed with sufficient flexibility to accommodate changes within their environment. As a result, CVSA must recognize the importance of continuing to move our strategic framework forward to take full advantage of our unique position among regulatory, enforcement and industry elements, ensuring the Alliance's activities continue to respond to the needs of the membership.

As we continue into the future, I'm once again encouraged by the progress we've made as an organization, and I look forward to furthering this success over the next several years. ■

## REGION I

## NYSDOT Teaches Module at New York State Police CVE Unit In-Service Training

By **Jonathan Nicastro**, Director, Motor Carrier Compliance Bureau, New York State Department of Transportation

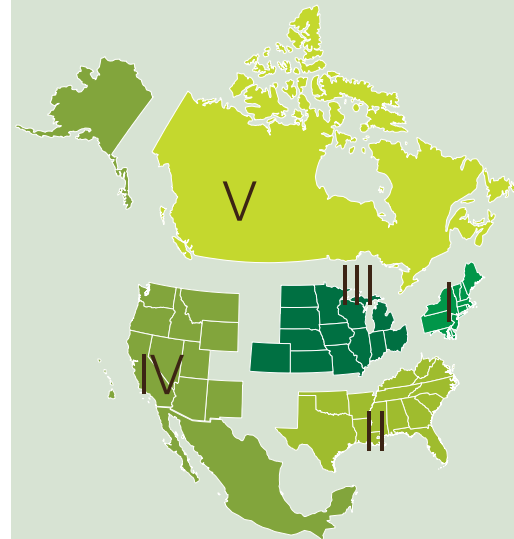
The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) taught a module at the New York State Police Commercial Vehicle Enforcement (CVE) Unit's in-service training. Each year, the state police bring their roadside inspectors to their academy for a multi-day training. NYSDOT Chief Investigator Justin Zimmerman presented a regulatory and hot topic classroom update while Supervising Roadside Inspector Lawrence Johnson delivered field training on the Smart Roadside Inspection system and Drivewyze and PrePass bypass functionality. Johnson also introduced the troopers to the new command center trailer that promotes CVSA and TAT (formerly Truckers Against Trafficking). NYSDOT and New York State Police have worked hand in hand in the Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program since its inception. Additionally, 47 local partner police departments employing 111 inspectors are critical to delivering the state's CVE program. ■



The new NYSDOT command center trailer.



Supervising Roadside Inspector Lawrence Johnson delivered field training on the Smart Roadside Inspection system and Drivewyze and PrePass bypass functionality.



## REGIONAL MAP

### Region I

Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, U.S. Virgin Islands and Vermont

### Region II

Alabama, American Samoa, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia

### Region III

Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Northern Mariana Islands, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin

### Region IV

Alaska, Arizona, California, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Mexico, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming

### Region V

Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, Nunavut, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Saskatchewan and Yukon

## Making a Difference

By **Paul Lemieux**, Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles

As an officer or inspector conducting commercial motor vehicle (CMV) safety inspections, do you ever wonder if all your efforts make a difference on our roadways? There were times when I would have that same thought – until recently.

On Jan. 15 at 8 a.m., I conducted overweight enforcement on I-95 in Greenwich, Connecticut. I was posted on the southbound side and saw a “hotshot” CMV – a pickup truck and trailer combination, which doesn’t require a commercial driver’s license.

The trailer had a full-size Dodge Ram van on the front and a Tesla passenger car on the rear. The trailer was leaning sharply to the left side. The truck had only single tires on the drive axle, and it appeared to be overweight. The trailer had dual axles, and the tires looked flat. I pulled out after the vehicle to make a stop. I was traveling behind it before making the stop and saw the rear bottom portion of the trailer bouncing off the surface of the roadway, causing sparks and spreading debris. I made the stop just before the New York state line and escorted the driver to the I-95 northbound Connecticut weigh station for weighing and inspection.

The vehicle was not marked with the required motor carrier name or USDOT number. I interviewed the driver and found that he was in a commerce move and was hired to transport the two vehicles from Connecticut to New York. The carrier he was hired by was registered in Florida.

I completed a Level I Inspection on the vehicle and driver. I quickly determined that the reason the trailer bounced off the roadway was that the trailer’s frame was broken and separated on the left side. The right side was cracked but still partially attached. I weighed it and found it 4,660 pounds overweight for the gross weight in combination.



Dashcam picture showing the cargo dragging on the road and tilting to the side.

In my Level I inspection, I found and documented 42 violations on the driver and the vehicle. The following out-of-service (OOS) violations were found:

- § 395.8(a)(1): No record of duty status
- § 392.9a(a)(1): No operating authority
- § 393.75(c): Bald tire on tow vehicle
- § 396.3(a)(1): > 20% brakes OOS – the trailer had no operable brakes
- § 393.71(h): Ball on hitch was loose and shifted
- § 393.43(d): No emergency brake system on trailer
- § 393.75(a)(3): Three tires on the trailer had < 50% psi max pressure
- § 393.75(a)(1): One tire on trailer had steel cord showing on tread surface
- § 393.201(a): Frame cracked/separated on left and right sides
- § 393.9(a): Trailer had no operable stop signals
- § 393.9(a): Trailer had no operable turn signals
- § 393.71(h): Cracked hitch system where ball locks into coupler

The driver, truck and trailer were all placed OOS. The transport vehicle and the vehicles that comprised the load were all towed from the scene. The driver was interviewed further and stated that he thought something was wrong with his vehicle, but he did not stop to check it.

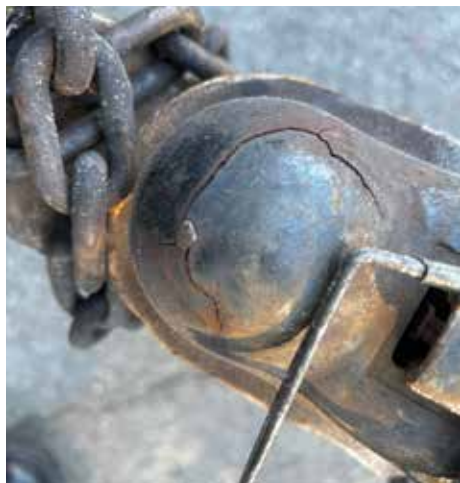
I have been conducting CMV inspections for the past 13 years as a member of the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicle Commercial Safety Division West Truck Team. I must say, this vehicle was in the most unsafe condition I have ever seen.

The driver was young and inexperienced in his duties. There is no excuse for him to have been driving this unsafe vehicle. Some of the blame should be directed at the motor carrier for not training the employee on how to conduct a pre-trip inspection and operate safely. As CMV inspectors, we are not only responsible for roadside enforcement but also must educate motor carriers on their responsibilities to operate safely within the regulations and applicable state laws.



Cargo listing left, damaged trailer.

If this motor carrier had better understood its responsibilities and liabilities, this driver and vehicle would never have been allowed to leave the yard. I can honestly say I made a difference that day on our roadways. ■



Damaged trailer ball hitch coupler.



Unsecured trailer ball hitch.



Broken trailer frame rail – driver side.



Broken trailer frame rail – front view.



Insufficient road clearance – rear of trailer.

## Delaware State Police Human Trafficking Awareness Initiative Results

By Sgt. Kevin Backer, Delaware State Police

Delaware state troopers in the Commercial Motor Vehicle Enforcement Unit participated in this year's CVSA Human Trafficking Awareness Initiative. Tpr. Michael Harrison and Tpr. Wayne Ingram were stationed at a rest area/service center located on I-95 in Newark, Delaware. They talked with commercial motor vehicle operators and presented educational information regarding human trafficking. They handed out more than 250 informational reference cards, provided by CVSA and TAT (formerly Truckers Against Trafficking), which include information on what to do if human trafficking activity is suspected. ■



Tpr. Michael Harrison (left) and Tpr. Wayne Ingram (right) chat with a passenger carrier vehicle driver (center) and present information on human trafficking.

## Love At First Cite: A Hazmat Inspector's Journey from Zero to COHMED

By **Rey Pierluisse**, Enforcement Officer/Safety Investigator, Motor Carrier Enforcement Division, Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission

The daily responsibilities of North American Standard Inspections and regulatory compliance offer a truly unparalleled experience. The ever-changing environments, the unpredictable challenges encountered roadside and the constant opportunities to educate the motoring public and industry professionals create a dynamic and rewarding career. Unlike other law enforcement roles (in my experience, at least), there's a profound sense of freedom on the road. Even during a routine detail, inspectors enjoy diverse options in shaping their day. Whether it's "Two-Axle Tuesday," "Hot-Shot Wednesday" or "Hazmat Friday," inspectors can focus on various categories of North American Standard Inspections – selecting commercial motor vehicles (CMV) either systematically or based on probable cause.

With about 4 million CMV inspections conducted annually across North America, every inspector contributes not only to this impressive figure but, more importantly, to the goal: safety. Achieving safety is never easy, but anything worthwhile rarely is.

Time has eluded me. As of writing this article, it has been seven years, nine months and three days, to be exact: 2,835 days. That's how long it's been since my appointment as a motor carrier enforcement officer with the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission's Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement. It's also the time leading up to my admission to this year's Cooperative Hazardous Materials Enforcement Development (COHMED) Conference. After years of dedicated training and professional growth, I reached a level of confidence and conviction where I could confidently (and adamantly) request a COHMED travel authorization from my administration, all while preserving my self-respect.

My journey of professional development began at the Pennsylvania State Police Commercial Vehicle Safety Division (PSP CVSD) in Harrisburg. The initial training program was a rigorous three-week course split into three parts: Part A, Part B and Part C. In Part C, we integrated the enforcement with state regulations, laws and procedures, tying it all together. After completing mentorships and demonstrating proficiency, I moved on to the general hazmat training at PSP CVSD. This was the moment I experienced the proverbial "What the HAZARD am I getting into?"

Fortunately, I had exceptional instructors. Rion Stann and David Cannon (retired) are arguably

two of the foremost hazmat gurus in the Commonwealth, and just about every hazmat-certified inspector in Pennsylvania would attest to this. Following intensive hazmat mentorships and navigating the labyrinth of one exception to the next, I attended the Cargo Tank Inspection class, also held at PSP CVSD, and led by none other than the 2016 North American Inspectors Championship Jimmy K. Ammons Grand Champion Daniel Voelker of Arizona. The hazmat refresher at the start of the course was both a critical component and a significant confidence booster for me and my classmates. Shortly after, I completed the Passenger Carrier Vehicle Inspection training in Harrisburg and then ventured to Golden, Colorado, for the New Entrant Safety Audit course with the Colorado State Patrol (CSP). A delightful surprise during my time there was the culinary experience at the CSP Academy, which serves a menu crafted by Colorado Correctional Center inmates. If you ever find yourself at the CSP Training Center, I assure you – the food will not disappoint!

As I honed my skills as an enforcement officer and safety investigator, I was honored to receive my agency's Officer of the Year award in 2019. In 2022, I competed in our state competition, proudly earning a crystal truck trophy and the esteemed title of PA Grand Champion. That same year, I attended the North American Inspectors Championship (NAIC), where I had the privilege of serving as a judge and immersing myself in the competition's experience. This invaluable exposure paved the way for my return in 2023, this time as a competitor.

In 2023, I came home with two team medals and a profound sense of humility. Competing against the best inspectors across North America was not only an honor but also an unforgettable experience. I gained friendships and built a network of incredible colleagues who have become treasured peers and vital professional resources.

After years of training and experience, I found myself very early in the morning at the Philadelphia airport, drinking mediocre coffee and eating an overpriced croissant. Soon after, I was on a plane to Costa Mesa, California. The 2025 COHMED Conference was officially on the agenda.

In the introduction, I sought to highlight the considerable time and dedication demanded to engage in what I regard as a truly prestigious conference. It's been a long and productive journey. Hazmat may not be for every inspector; those actively involved

in hazmat operations know exactly what I mean. Whether your focus lies in enforcement or compliance, navigating the complex maze of parts, subparts, subchapters, appendices and interpretations is a demanding and unpredictable journey that calls for unwavering commitment and resilience.

As I wandered through the lobby and halls of the conference center, I couldn't help but run into a few familiar faces from NAIC on my way to the registration area. Meanwhile, I found myself persistently beleaguered by Tom Krolak, who was determined to get me to buy raffle tickets. The hall was buzzing with activity.

Eventually, I made my way to the general training session – Cargo Tank: Cradle to Grave. The grand ballroom was impressively set up, featuring rows upon rows of padded banquet chairs, two large screens and a stage with a podium. The room quickly began filling, and as is my habit, I chose a seat within what I like to call the "successful T" – the front row or the main aisle seats. Allegedly, studies show that students in these areas typically outperform their peers. In truth, I was just trying to trick myself into feeling smarter.

The entire COHMED Conference experience was nothing short of delightful and stimulating. If I had one complaint, it would be that there simply wasn't enough time to attend every class. The sheer variety of options was overwhelming. I found myself wishing I could divide and conquer. Alas, multitasking at that level isn't my strong suit, and functioning as two halves of one person is, unfortunately, beyond my superhuman abilities.

As a trained observer, I couldn't help but notice the demographics and dynamics of the room. Many attendees were professionals over the age of 50 – a remarkable audience filled with experience and expertise. Yet, my curious mind couldn't help but wander.

Hazmat, as we know, is not for the fainthearted. Those who excel in this field do so because of one critical factor: T-I-M-E. It takes time to develop a genuine appreciation or passion for something – or someone. I had always considered hazmat a strong suit of mine, but attending the COHMED Conference completely reshaped my perspective on my career, skills and attributes.

The professionals in that room were nothing short of impressive, yet they were also, at their core, ordinary people like me. They all

had to start somewhere. Building professional relationships throughout my time at the conference reinforced this realization and gave me a renewed sense of inspiration and respect for this field.

This prompted me to reflect on how federal, state and local agencies can better attract young professionals and inspire them to engage in the hazmat field. One thing we all hope to avoid is a significant age gap within the industry, as this could result in inexperienced leadership when retirements inevitably impact our seasoned and tenured experts.

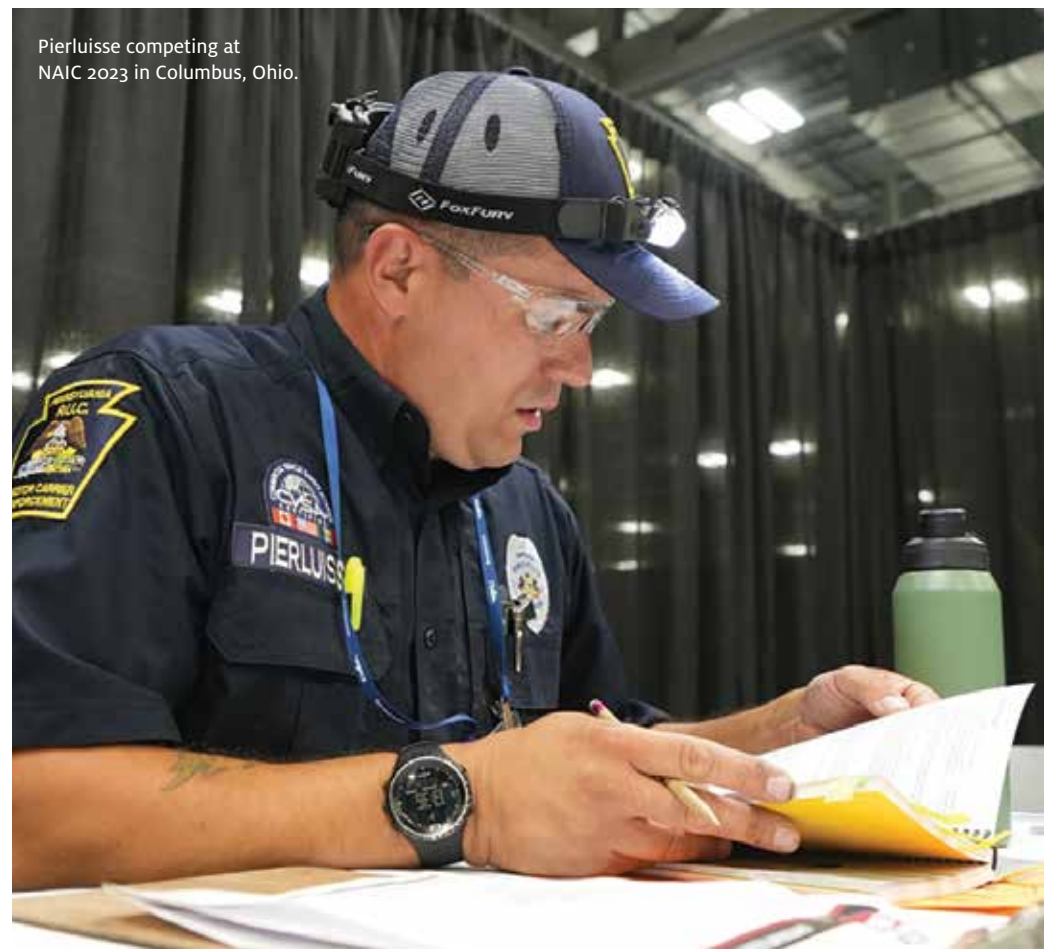
It is incumbent upon our hazmat leaders to recognize an upcoming hazmat inspector with a strong willingness to learn and develop professionally. It goes without saying that the only path to hazmat royalty begins with mentorship. Mentoring the newer generation to reach the proficiency of senior inspectors requires a combination of well-thought-out strategies. Professional development plans with clear paths and achievable milestones can serve as motivation, incorporating training sessions, certifications and continuous learning opportunities. Regular feedback sessions can provide constructive criticism and positive reinforcement, motivating inspectors to improve. Also, cultivating a supportive work culture that values continuous learning and encourages collaboration ensures the development of a motivated and proficient inspector and promotes fluidity in an agency's succession planning. As senior leaders approach retirement, the organization may face a sudden leadership void that inexperienced inspectors might not yet be equipped to fill.

Hazmat compliance work is anything but facts and figures. The professionals I speak of are defined by a combination of technical expertise, keen attention to detail and strong interpersonal skills, the latter of which is relative and marginal. Adaptability is key, as each day presents unique challenges that require flexibility and composure under pressure. A true dedication to safety drives their work as they strive to protect lives, property and the environment through meticulous – and cumbersome – inspections. Professionalism and integrity build trust and credibility, while a commitment to continuous learning ensures they remain knowledgeable in an ever-evolving field. Ultimately, the blend of such qualities as technical proficiency, attention to detail and a passion for safety enables hazmat inspectors to excel in their critical and high-stakes role.

My COHMED Conference experience broadened my perspective on the vast and complex world of hazmat, revealing depths I had never previously explored. It illuminated just how much there is still to learn and inspired a renewed commitment to expanding my knowledge. I left Costa Mesa with a profound respect for hazmat and a stronger, more solid foundation to support my ongoing learning and professional growth as an inspector.

I eagerly anticipate next year's COHMED Conference and strongly encourage agencies and administrations to invest in strengthening their hazmat programs. By inspiring newer inspectors to participate and connect with some of the finest professionals North America has to offer, we can foster invaluable networking and growth. This organizational investment will undoubtedly contribute to safer roadways for years to come. ■

***Hazmat, as we know, is not for the fainthearted. Those who excel in this field do so because of one critical factor: T-I-M-E. It takes time to develop a genuine appreciation or passion for something.***



Pierluisse competing at NAIC 2023 in Columbus, Ohio.

## Florida Highway Patrol Updates

By **Chief Troy Thompson**, Office of Commercial Vehicle Enforcement, Florida Highway Patrol

### FHP Provides Outreach During HTAI

During the week of Jan. 13-17, the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) participated in CVSA's Human Trafficking Awareness Initiative (HTAI). Human trafficking is one of the greatest atrocities of the 21st century. As many as 24.9 million men, women and children are sold into prostitution, domestic servitude or other forced labor around the globe. During this wave, FHP members visited three bus terminals and seven truck stops throughout Florida to provide human trafficking awareness, outreach, identification and prevention concepts aimed at educating commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers, motor carriers and truck stop/bus terminal employees about the crime of human trafficking, indicators to look for and what to do if human trafficking is suspected.

Additionally, during the week, FHP members conducted more than 1,500 traffic stops and CMV inspections, during which more than 400 informational wallet cards were provided to the public. FHP members also provided information and materials to local law enforcement agencies to help them combat human trafficking during their interactions with the public. FHP also conducted seven outreach events to industry. ■



Tpr. Joseph Dowler hangs a human trafficking awareness sign at a truck stop in Ocala, Florida.



Tpr. Pelayo Llabre (middle) and Tpr. Michelle Truyol (right) provide HTAI materials to a driver (left) at a truck stop in Miami, Florida.



Tpr. Mark Horn gives a human trafficking awareness presentation to the Osceola (Florida) Sheriff's Department.

## FHP Participates in Publix Truck Driving Competition

Every year, hardworking truck drivers from Publix showcase their skills and industry knowledge by participating in company truck-driving competitions. On Jan. 21-22, FHP Commercial Vehicle Enforcement (CVE) Miami District was honored to participate in the competitions held for the Publix Miami and Deerfield Beach Warehouses. The partnership between Publix and FHP supports transparency for judging drivers while also promoting industry-government collaboration, public awareness and CMV safety. The FHP appreciates the commitment to safety exemplified by Florida's motor carriers and professional drivers. ■



Tpr. Ivan Negrin judges a driver's efforts in the Publix Truck Driving Competition.



Tpr. Ivan Negrin (left center) and Tpr. Vincent Carey (right center) with the professional driver contestants in the Publix Truck Driving Competition.

## FHP Participates in Florida Trucking Association Safety Summit

On Jan. 20, Chief Troy Thompson, Capt. Ezra Folsom and Sgt. Casey Moore participated in the 2025 Florida Trucking Association (FTA) Safety Summit in Tampa, Florida. The FTA Safety Summit is a free event open to all trucking industry professionals to hear from safety and regulatory experts about safety, emerging technologies and best practices. More than 100 professionals were in attendance. Chief Thompson discussed FHP's efforts on safety regulations, cargo theft and International Registration Plan technology enhancements. ■

[Continued on next page](#)

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Tpr. Kevin Nelms discusses pre-trip inspections with attendees.

## FHP Conducts Outreach to Progressive Truck Insurance

On Feb. 27, FHP conducted outreach to Progressive Truck Insurance. The outreach led to discussion about safe driving behaviors, SMS methodology, pre-trip inspections, the Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse and human trafficking awareness. There were 42 attendees at the presentation. ■



Sgt. Denise Meredith leads classroom discussion.

## FHP Attends Florida Rock and Tank Lines Safety Award Banquet

On Feb. 26, Sgt. Moore attended the Florida Rock and Tank Lines (FRTL) Annual Safety Award Banquet. Since 1962, FRTL has operated as an industry-leading premier bulk tank carrier. They serve the southeastern U.S., transporting petroleum and other liquid and dry bulk commodities from 16 terminals across the Southeast. This year, FHP CVE assisted by choosing the winner of the J.R. Mabbett Driver of the Year award. The winner was selected from five finalists initially chosen by FRTL executives. This year's winner was Robert Harper from the Bainbridge, Georgia, terminal. FRTL is consistently committed to safety, has a great reputation within the trucking industry and is an active member of the Florida Trucking Association. ■



**Left to right:** Jim Anderson, FRTL vice president – safety and risk management; Sgt. Casey Moore, FHP CVE; Robert Harper, driver of the year winner; Robert Anderson, driver of the year finalist; Steve Welch, driver of the year finalist; Mike Wilkerson, driver of the year finalist; Darren Moore, driver of the year finalist; Henry Mabbett, FRTL vice president – sales; Rob Sandlin, FRTL president.

## FHP and DBPR Inspect Migrant Farmworker Buses

On March 12, FHP CVE Tampa District partnered with inspectors from the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) to inspect migrant farmworker bus operations in Plant City, Florida. During the detail, FHP conducted 17 Level I Inspections and one Level V Inspection, resulting in five vehicles being placed out of service. DBPR inspected 30 migratory agricultural worker buses and found 12 buses to be in violation of regulations. The detail was a tremendous success by providing education to migrant farmworker bus operations, ensuring compliance with safety regulations and developing stronger partnerships between government agencies and local farmers. ■



Tpr. Raymond Ada inspecting brakes.



FHP conducted 17 Level I Inspections, and DBPR completed 30 inspections.

# Combating Altered and Counterfeit IFTA Credentials: A Vital Step in Highway Safety

By **Lt. Billy J. Johnson**, Motor Carrier Enforcement, Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles; Chair, IFTA Law Enforcement Committee

As a member of the International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) Law Enforcement Committee, I understand that enforcing IFTA is more than just tax compliance – it's about safeguarding our highways. By ensuring carriers adhere to IFTA, we help create a safer transportation system. However, a rising threat – altered and counterfeit IFTA credentials – is putting both the integrity of the system and public safety in jeopardy.

A 2017 Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) safety analysis revealed that interstate carriers operating vehicles over 26,000 pounds with at least one IFTA violation were 45.8% more likely to be involved in a crash. These statistics clearly demonstrate the connection between IFTA compliance and highway safety. When IFTA credentials are tampered with or forged, it's not just tax revenue at risk – it's public safety. As we work to ensure safer roads, it is critical to tackle fraudulent IFTA credentials head-on.

## The Impact of Altered and Counterfeit IFTA Credentials

Altered and counterfeit IFTA decals and licenses are becoming an all-too-common issue, allowing carriers to bypass the accountability that IFTA imposes. This not only jeopardizes the financial integrity of the system but also compromises highway safety by enabling vehicles to operate without proper scrutiny.

Fraudulent IFTA credentials allow carriers to avoid paying taxes, diminishing funds for maintaining and improving the infrastructure on which all road users rely. But the damage doesn't stop there. It creates an uneven playing field wherein dishonest carriers undercut those who play by the rules. Even more concerning, these fraudulent practices often signal a broader disregard for safety regulations; carriers who falsify credentials are likely to neglect other critical safety requirements.

For legitimate carriers, the burden is real. Law-abiding operators often find themselves at a disadvantage when fraudsters gain an unfair edge by evading IFTA requirements. Enforcing IFTA regulations helps ensure that those who follow the rules are not undermined by those who attempt to game the system, fostering a level playing field where fairness and safety go hand in hand.

## How to Spot Altered and Counterfeit IFTA Credentials

An essential strategy in combating fraud is ensuring commercial motor vehicle (CMV) enforcement officers are trained to spot altered or counterfeit IFTA credentials. The IFTA Law

Enforcement Committee plays a key role in this, discussing emerging trends during quarterly roundtable calls and presenting at IFTA events like the annual IFTA Educational Forum, which unites enforcement, administration, audit and industry professionals.

Some of the most common indicators of altered or counterfeit decals and licenses include:

**⚠️ Inconsistent Decal Appearance:** Genuine IFTA decals are approximately 3" x 3" vinyl with white letters and a background color corresponding to the year (blue for 2025). If a decal looks like it's printed on paper or is taped onto the truck, it could be counterfeit.

**⚠️ Signs of Tampering:** Be on the lookout for overwriting, erasure or inconsistent fonts. Fraudulent documents are often altered to change the year of validity or the carrier to which the license is issued.

By staying vigilant, CMV enforcement officers can quickly identify fraudulent credentials, preventing unsafe vehicles from hitting the road undetected.

## Using the IFTA Clearinghouse to Verify Carrier Accounts

The IFTA Clearinghouse is a powerful tool for verifying a carrier's IFTA status. It aids enforcement personnel in identifying counterfeit or altered credentials and identifies carriers with revoked or suspended accounts. Enforcement personnel should contact their jurisdiction's IFTA commissioner for information on accessing the clearinghouse.

## The Damage Caused by Fraudulent IFTA Credentials

The financial impact of fraudulent IFTA credentials is significant. States and provinces rely on tax revenue to fund highway maintenance, infrastructure projects and safety improvements. When carriers evade these taxes, they reduce funding for critical roadwork, which ultimately affects all road users.

But the damage extends far beyond lost tax revenue. Fraudulent credentials erode the credibility of IFTA, undermine safety regulations, and place the public and the trucking industry at risk. Moreover, legitimate carriers face a competitive disadvantage when fraudsters gain an unfair advantage by bypassing IFTA requirements.

For the honest carrier following the rules, it's disheartening to see their hard work undercut by those attempting to skirt the system.

Ensuring strong enforcement of IFTA regulations helps protect these carriers and promotes fairness so fraudulent actors cannot undermine carriers who are doing the right thing.

## Why Enforcement of IFTA Requirements Matters

The enforcement of IFTA requirements is critical for much more than tax collection – it guarantees that all carriers, large and small, are held to the same standards. IFTA enforcement helps identify potentially dangerous vehicles that might otherwise go unnoticed, reducing the likelihood of unsafe trucks on the road. By cracking down on fraudulent IFTA credentials, we're not only protecting tax revenue crucial to transportation infrastructure, but we are also making significant strides toward safer highways for everyone.

The correlation between IFTA violations and a higher crash risk, as shown by the FMCSA safety analysis, further underscores the need for vigilant enforcement. Carriers willing to falsify IFTA credentials are more likely to neglect other safety requirements, creating an increased crash risk on our highways. By enforcing IFTA compliance, law enforcement plays a pivotal role in ensuring a safer and more accountable transportation system.

## Conclusion

Addressing the issue of altered and counterfeit IFTA credentials is a crucial part of maintaining the integrity of the IFTA system and ensuring the safety of our highways. By using tools like the IFTA Clearinghouse and remaining vigilant, CMV enforcement officers can prevent fraud, protect the industry and ensure compliant carriers aren't unfairly undercut. Ultimately, strong enforcement keeps our roads safer and provides a level playing field for all carriers – creating a better, fairer system for everyone. The IFTA Law Enforcement Committee thanks you for your efforts to "put the BRAKES on FAKES!" ■



A counterfeit IFTA decal found on a truck in Virginia in February.

## REGION II

## Virginia State Police Motor Carrier Unit Troopers Combat Human Trafficking in the Commonwealth

By Lt. Shawn D. Gobble, Motor Carrier Safety Unit, Virginia State Police

On Jan. 30, Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin highlighted Operation Silence Shattered, a robust anti-human trafficking initiative designed to raise awareness and protect vulnerable young people across communities and college campuses in Virginia as well as supporting key legislation before the Virginia General Assembly aimed at eradicating human trafficking in the Commonwealth.

The Virginia State Police Safety Division Motor Carrier Unit, along with the seven other Bureau of Field Operations divisions across the agency, are working diligently to raise awareness and provide knowledge about the resources available to identify and combat human trafficking and, more importantly, resources for identified victims.

Capt. Sean Stewart stated that troopers have a unique opportunity in their daily activities to engage with commercial motor vehicle drivers and passengers who are the eyes and ears across the country. Virginia State Police troopers are specifically trained on how to identify human trafficking victims as well as those who may be engaged in human trafficking, communicating this information to

drivers and passengers through a coordinated statewide public information campaign.

Since the beginning of Operation Silence Shattered, the Virginia State Police and the Human Trafficking Institute have educated more than 3,700 people on the topic of human trafficking. These interactions have occurred everywhere, from rest areas and weigh stations to law enforcement and prosecutorial training. Through the Silence Shattered partnerships with law enforcement across the Commonwealth, 21 arrests have been made, including traffickers and sex buyers, and 12 victims have been identified and offered services.

In addition to Operation Silence Shattered, on Jan. 17, 2024, the Virginia State Police announced the launch of a human trafficking hotline to report suspected incidents of human trafficking anonymously. Since its inception, the hotline has received over 333 submissions. There are 136 active human trafficking investigations, and 47 victims have been identified and offered services as of November 2024. ■



Left to right: Capt. Sean Stewart, Sgt. Dustin Eggleston, Capt. Mark Beach and Capt Michael Jenkins.

📅 MARK YOUR CALENDAR

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[www.cvsa.org/ace](http://www.cvsa.org/ace).



## Georgia's School Bus Safety Program Promotes Comprehensive Safety Practices

By **Sgt. Jessica Crump**, Motor Carrier Compliance Division, Georgia Department of Public Safety

School buses are one of the most iconic symbols of childhood in the U.S., representing the daily journey to and from school for millions of children across the country. The Georgia Department of Public Safety's Motor Carrier Compliance Division has implemented the School Bus Safety Program, a comprehensive safety initiative designed to support each element of pupil transportation in Georgia. The school bus, driver and school system play specific and vital roles in the safe transportation of Georgia's most precious resource: our children.

The School Bus Safety Unit is composed of motor carrier compliance officers responsible for conducting safety inspections on school buses operating on Georgia's roadways. The School Bus Safety Unit was established in its current form in 2016 and performs approximately 20,000 bus inspections. This unit has 13 officers and three supervisors assigned throughout the state to conduct safety inspections. In addition to their regular

duties ensuring the safety of Georgia's local school bus fleets, they also perform the duties of a certified commercial motor vehicle (CMV) enforcement officer. These officers ensure the CMVs on Georgia's roadways operate safely, follow Georgia's traffic laws and comply with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's rules and regulations.

The state-developed program is specifically designed to record and report the annual statutory safety inspection of each school bus operating in Georgia. Through partnerships with the Georgia Department of Public Safety, Georgia Department of Education and school system administrators, the program promotes the annual training of Georgia's school bus drivers and supports quality school bus maintenance programs within each school system. The success of the School Bus Safety Program lies in its comprehensive nature. By bringing together state agencies, local school systems and bus drivers, the program ensures that no aspect of school bus safety is

overlooked. This teamwork makes the safety of Georgia's children a shared responsibility, with every entity playing a crucial role in the transportation process.

The School Bus Safety Unit utilizes a safety program known as the school bus driver license validation system, which was incorporated in 2021. This system allows for the weekly verification of school bus driver credentials. This system automatically runs the driver's licenses of school bus drivers and notifies each school system of any licensing issues that may be identified. This is another way the unit ensures the drivers getting behind the wheel consistently comply with the regulations put in place.

The unit is also responsible for the School Bus Driver Outreach Program. This proactive and interactive safety program involves state officers performing safety inspections and county or municipal school bus operation partners. It allows an open discussion forum



The School Bus Safety Unit officers at a Bluebird facility tour in Fort Valley, Georgia.

for officers, school bus drivers, mechanics and transportation directors to exchange ideas on safely transporting Georgia's students. With 1.2 million students transported each morning and afternoon, that's 2.4 million transports daily.

School bus drivers receive refresher courses and hands-on training each year to stay current on best practices, new technology and safety regulations. The buses themselves are rigorously inspected to ensure they meet the statutory safety standards. Through it all, local school systems are provided with the support they need to maintain their fleets and implement safety initiatives.

This proactive approach helps reduce the likelihood of mechanical failures and ensures buses continue to operate smoothly and safely throughout the school year. The Georgia Department of Education and the Georgia Department of Public Safety also support local school systems in their efforts to keep buses running, providing resources and guidance.

Georgia's School Bus Safety Program models how comprehensive safety practices can protect children during their daily commutes to and from school. By ensuring buses are inspected, drivers are well-trained and maintenance programs are in place, the program contributes to a safer environment for children, allowing them to travel to school with peace of mind.

The efforts of the Georgia Department of Public Safety, Georgia Department of Education, school administrators and bus drivers create a layered approach to student safety, ensuring that Georgia's school buses remain among the safest in the nation. As we progress, it is essential to maintain and strengthen these efforts, guaranteeing children are transported safely, securely and responsibly each day. ■

***By bringing together state agencies, local school systems and bus drivers, the program ensures that no aspect of school bus safety is overlooked.***



Motor carrier officers Matt Kelly (front) and Javoris Burnett (back) performing inspections in Gray, Georgia.



Motor carrier officer Steven Albrycht at the Georgia Association of Pupil Transportation Conference in Jekyll Island, Georgia.

## How Do You Know You've Been Exposed to Radiation?

By **Cpl. Dustin Henderson**, Radiation/Nuclear Detection Unit, Texas Department of Public Safety

When you hear the word “radioactive,” what comes to mind? Some think of the Incredible Hulk, Chernobyl or Three Mile Island. Others think of Kansas Highway Patrol Tpr. Nick Wright screaming “RADIOACTIVE!” in the highest pitch possible at the top of his lungs. Either way, it can be a scary term. Radiation is odorless, colorless, tasteless and doesn't feel like anything. So, how do you know you're being exposed to it?

The Texas Department of Public Safety (TXDPS) created its Radiation/Nuclear (Rad/Nuc) Threat Detection Unit in February 2024 to locate radiation traveling along Texas roadways. Many other states have similar units, such as Florida, Colorado and Georgia. TXDPS has partnered with the City of Houston (Texas) through a Department of Homeland Security grant program called Securing the Cities (STC). The STC program aims to reduce the risk of successful radiological or nuclear terrorist attacks in major metropolitan areas by equipping and training state and local agencies to detect, analyze and report such materials.

TXDPS partnered with the City of Houston to secure funding to train and equip every TXDPS trooper with a personal radiation detector (PRD) through this grant program. The TXDPS Rad/Nuc Unit comprises a lieutenant, a sergeant and six corporals. These individuals, with the assistance of field instructors and the City of Houston, have successfully trained and equipped approximately 800 troopers with PRDs across Texas since September 2024, focusing on the southern border first, and are scheduled to issue an additional 960 through the end of 2025. The rollout will continue through 2026.

How successful is the program? Since September 2024, TXDPS troopers have encountered radiological materials more than 170 times since being equipped with radiation detection equipment. These encounters range from medical patients to industrial use and contaminated fencing. Class 7 inspections have increased 62% compared to the year prior to creating the unit and equipping troopers across the state with PRDs.

The unit has deployed to numerous incidents across the state, including calls involving:

- A truck fire with a radiological source in which first responders believed they had ingested radiological material
- Suspicious package calls to ensure they were not dirty bombs
- Locating lost radioactive sources
- Crashes involving radioactive material
- High-attendance events such as the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo, Fiesta San Antonio, visits from dignitaries, college football games, the SpaceX Starship launch, and in 2026, the FIFA World Cup, with matches in Dallas and Houston

Many CMV inspectors do not realize you do not have to be CVSA Level VI certified to inspect most radioactive shipments. Most shipments do not require placards to be displayed. Many shipments consist of radiopharmaceuticals being transported to a hospital for medical purposes. Others are utilized in roadway construction, building construction, welding and the oilfield industry.

So, how do you know what vehicles are transporting radioactive materials? Detection capability is the key to locating radioactive materials because transport vehicles can range from a small passenger car or van to a truck-tractor or semi-trailer. Even if you're not Level VI certified, with the proper education and equipment, you can safely inspect radioactive materials that are not transuranic waste or highway route-controlled quantities. CVSA offers an excellent course through CVSA Learning ([learning.cvsa.org](https://learning.cvsa.org)) called “Class 7 Radioactive Material Inspections for the Non-Level VI Inspector.” The Counterterrorism Operations Support Center for Radiological Nuclear Training provides free training on the “luxurious beaches” of Mercury, Nevada, for first responders in interdicting and responding to radioactive incidents.

Want to learn more about what Texas is encountering and how we are responding? Reach out to one of our TXDPS Rad/Nuc team members at [radnuc@texas.gov](mailto:radnuc@texas.gov) for information on securing training and equipment funding. ■



Crash involving a passenger car transporting radioactive material.



The TXDPS Rad/Nuc team. **Left to right:** Lt. Virgil Verduzco, Sgt. Brad Gibson, Cpl. Kaleb Rains, Cpl. Dillon Steadman, Cpl. Scott Keane, Cpl. Travis Wroten and Cpl. Casey Jones. (Not pictured: Cpl. Dustin Henderson.)



Truck fire containing radioactive material.

## REGION II

## Louisiana State Police Hold the Line on Superbowl Security and Safety

By **Sgt Gregory Handy Jr.**, Louisiana State Police Transportation Safety Services

While the investigation of the New Year's Day terrorist attack on Bourbon Street in New Orleans, Louisiana, was still being conducted, the Louisiana State Police (LSP) was leaning forward, looking to enhance security for Super Bowl LIX. Troopers assigned to LSP's Commercial Vehicle Enforcement (CVE) Unit were responsible for helping to ensure commercial motor vehicles (CMV) were not used to conduct any further attacks. The game site, Caesar's Superdome, is nestled among the intersection of multiple major highways in downtown New Orleans, with a huge CMV presence. Increased CMV traffic was critical for the support of the game and fans, delivering hundreds of loads of items such as food, beverages, television equipment, souvenirs and almost anything imaginable. It would be impossible to stop the flow of CMVs in the affected area.

LSP CVE command staff worked with our federal law enforcement counterparts in U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to develop plans to allow the safe passage of CMVs into the secure area around the Superdome. The plans included the deployment of specialized X-ray equipment owned by CBP known as the Vehicle and Cargo Inspection System (VACIS). VACIS scans both sides of large items, including trucks, semi-trucks and cargo containers, and is usually used at ports of entry. The system takes an X-ray of a vehicle, allowing VACIS operators to spot things that look out of place. VACIS can detect anything from large hidden compartments down to small packages – or even something as tiny as a handgun. It even picks up people being smuggled in a trailer or vehicle.

CMVs entering the secure area around the Superdome were routed through specific travel lanes, which directed them to a non-invasive trip through the VACIS. It takes only 7-10 minutes to search a vehicle with VACIS, saving a great deal of time. Personnel also used a handheld device called a RadSeeker to measure any radiation coming from vehicle cargo. Once CBP and LSP personnel completed the technology search, the CMVs were allowed into the secure area to complete their deliveries. Any CMVs found to have questionable cargo were subjected to a manual search before being allowed into the secure area. All cleared vehicles were escorted into and out of the secure perimeter by LSP personnel.

From Feb. 2-9, LSP troopers successfully screened 1,596 drivers and passengers, escorted 1,019 cleared vehicles without issue, and prevented unauthorized access to the secure area while keeping operations smooth and efficient. Troopers handled security concerns such as denied entries, firearm detections and cargo checks without slowing the entry process. Coordination and teamwork between LSP, CBP, multiple other law enforcement partners, the NFL and multiple private entities led to a successful operation that provided a secure and safe experience for all fans and attendees at Superbowl LIX. LSP has received numerous accolades praising the professionalism not only of troopers assigned to screening CMVs but also the 200+ troopers assigned to security in the French Quarter, Central Business District and inside Caesar's Superdome. ■



Drone pictures of the secured area prior to the Superbowl.

## Nebraska State Patrol Updates

By **Sgt. Matt Ramsey**, Carrier Enforcement Division, Nebraska State Patrol

### Nebraska State Patrol Hosts Heavy Vehicle Data Recorder Training

From Feb. 3-6, the Nebraska State Patrol hosted a 32-hour Heavy Vehicle Event Data Recorder (HVEDR) training for 16 students at its headquarters in Lincoln, Nebraska. The training was conducted by Forensic Training Group LLP instructors Steve Anderson, a retired Ontario Provincial Police officer, and James Loftis, a retired Oklahoma State Trooper. Both individuals hold a certification from the Accreditation Commission for Traffic Accident Reconstruction.

The four-day training provided an overview of the history, development and function of heavy vehicle digital forensics. Our troopers enhanced their interpretation skills through situation-based crash reconstruction. Topics included best practices for accessing and documenting HVEDR data, HVEDR data available on heavy trucks, original equipment manufacturer (OEM) software/adapters, the Synercon Forensic Link Adapter, TruckCRYPT software and validation testing case analysis.

On the morning of day three, the class braved cold temperatures and freezing rain to conduct real-world tests of various collision mitigation systems at Werner's corporate headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska. The class was highly impressed with the technology used in the trucks.

Special thanks to Forensic Training Group for the training and to Werner for providing their facilities and vehicles for testing. ■



**Left to right:** Ben Busboom, Werner safety specialist and former Million Mile Accident-Free Driver; Mike Johnson, Werner claims supervisor; Tpr. Bill Burr; Sgt. Ben Schropfer; Tpr. Nate Hadaway; Tpr. Dan Oliver; Tpr. Aaron Schoen; Brad White, Werner director of safety; Sgt. Matt Ramsey; Lt. Mike Maytum; Investigator Kris Hunzeker; Sgt. Eric Pfeiffer; Tpr. Dakota Wilson; Tpr. Josh Hulse; Sgt. Jay Huhman; and Tpr. Isaac Ascherl.

## Nebraska State Patrol Holds Fourth Annual Citizen's Academy

The Nebraska State Patrol, in partnership with the Nebraska Trucking Association, hosted a "citizen's academy" at the Nebraska State Patrol Headquarters on Feb. 25. Approximately 32 members from 12 different companies representing various roles in the trucking industry attended the event.

The academy was broken down into a morning and afternoon session. The morning session was held at the Nebraska State Patrol Headquarters in Lincoln, Nebraska. Topics included a basic overview of the Nebraska State Patrol Carrier Enforcement Division, size and weight laws, motor carrier compliance, commercial driver's license compliance, hours of service basics, electronic logging device information, TAT (formerly known as Truckers Against Trafficking) overview, Level I Inspection Procedure, post-crash inspection process and the DataQ program.

The afternoon session was held at the Waverly (Nebraska) westbound scales. There, participants were divided into three groups. The groups rotated through various stations, including an observation of the scale's function and related technology, a Level I Inspection and performance-based brake test demo, and drone and K-9 demonstrations. Our SWAT

team also brought out one of their response vehicles for people to check out.

The Nebraska State Patrol has hosted the citizen's academy with the Nebraska Trucking Association for the last four years. This has been a very popular event for everyone who attends, and troopers and industry partners all agree that the real value is being able to provide a behind-the-scenes look at commercial motor vehicle enforcement.

We in Nebraska believe that highway safety is not just something that law enforcement should be concerned with. Highway safety is a partnership between industry and law enforcement, and everyone has a role in it. Events like this one help strengthen that relationship, which pays dividends down the road by keeping the roads in the Cornhusker State safe.

We could not do events like this without a strong relationship with the Nebraska Trucking Association and industry partners from around the great state of Nebraska. Special thanks to Crete Carrier Corporation for providing a vehicle and driver for the Level I Inspection demonstration. ■



Citizen's academy attendees were given a packet with helpful information.



Tpr. Austin Donner and K-9 "Tilt" present to a group about the K-9 division.

UPDATES FROM 

# Mexico

## Training Day on Project "Guardianes del Asfalto" Against Human Trafficking

Training sessions for the "Guardianes del Asfalto" (Guardians of the Asphalt) project against human trafficking were held March 5 and 12 for offices of the Secretary of Infrastructure, Communications and Transportation (SICT) in Quintana Roo, Chiapas, Campeche and Tabasco, as well as for members of the National Chamber of Cargo Transportation.

A multidisciplinary team conducted the workshop, including representatives from the General Directorate of Federal Motor Transport (DGAF), the Citizens Council for Justice and Security of Mexico City, Pozo de Vida and TAT (formerly known as Truckers Against

Trafficking). The sessions covered the main characteristics of human trafficking, its various forms, reporting protocols and the operation of the "Guardianes del Asfalto" project.

The training emphasized the crucial role public servants in the trucking industry play in crime prevention as they establish direct communication with drivers, the general public and companies. This enables them to raise awareness about human trafficking risks and proper responses to suspicious situations. Fostering a culture of reporting is one of the project's pillars, considered vital for eradicating this crime in vulnerable communities. The program aims to provide federal transportation

workers with the knowledge needed to recognize warning signs and act quickly when encountering potential human trafficking cases.

These actions reinforce the commitment of the "Guardianes del Asfalto" project to promote training initiatives focused on human rights and gender equality, ensuring crime prevention remains central to public policies for community safety and well-being. This training marks the beginning of a series of actions aimed at strengthening institutional responses to human trafficking and consolidating active participation from all stakeholders, especially motor carriers, who are strategically positioned to help prevent this crime. ■



**Clockwise from top left:** Nicole Gallegos (Pozo de Vida), Oscar Onofre (CANACAR), Salvador Monroy (SICT) and Jesús Yosafat González Ramírez (Citizens Council for Justice and Security of Mexico City).

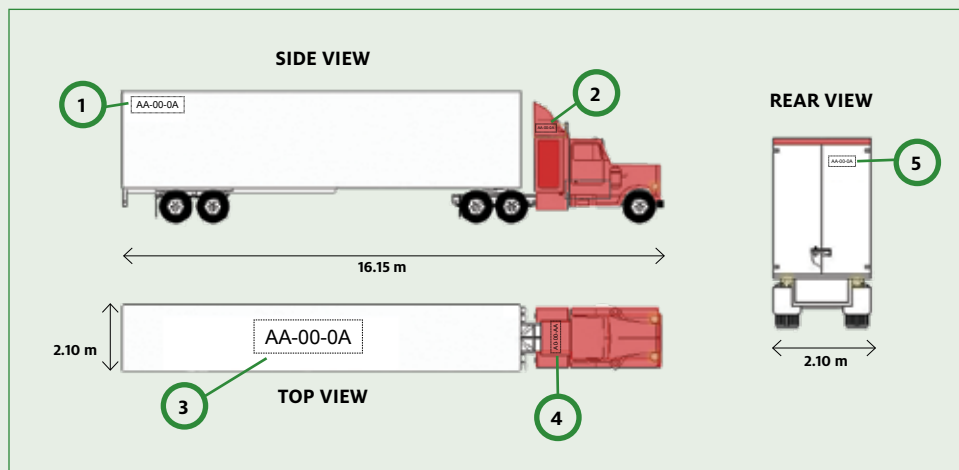
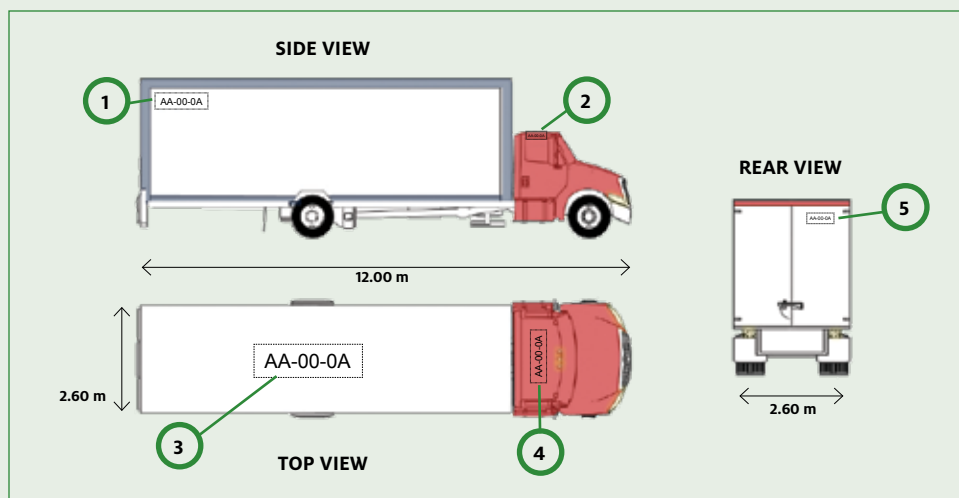
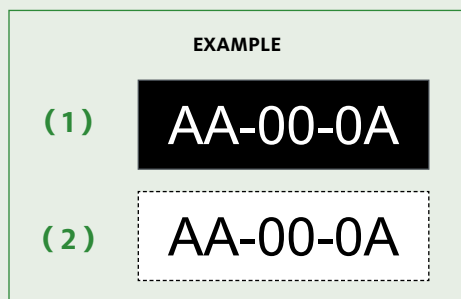
## SICT and DGAF Implement New Vehicle Identification on Federal Highways

SICT, through DGAF, is implementing a joint strategy with the trucking sector to identify vehicles traveling on federally managed highways and bridges.

Citing highway safety as a high priority, SICT began requiring "balizado" (marking) of federal trucking units in various categories starting Feb. 7.

The identification markings may be applied using decals or paint in specified locations according to vehicle type and configuration. The alphanumeric characters used will correspond to those on the vehicle's identification plate. Materials must be durable and reflective to ensure visibility day and night. For double-articulated configurations, each trailer or semi-trailer must have its own marking.

SICT expects that this agreement will enhance safety on federal highways for all travelers and will facilitate inspecting commercial motor vehicles. ■



*Left and above: Examples of "balizado" – marking of federal trucking units.*

Continued on next page

Continued from page 21

## SICT Transfers Presidency of National Mobility and Road Safety System to SEDATU

SICT Undersecretary of Infrastructure Juan Carlos Fuentes Orrala transferred the 2024-2025 National System of Mobility and Road Safety presidency to the Secretary of Agrarian, Territorial and Urban Development (SEDATU) on March 12.

During the ceremony, Fuentes Orrala noted that under SICT's leadership, the system addressed eight priority issues, including implementing the National Road Mobility Strategy (ENAMOV 2023-2042), continuing work on the National Urban Collective Public Transportation Policy and proposing guidelines for harmonizing traffic regulations.

He said future work should include developing a strategic plan to link different transportation modes, such as cargo and passenger trains, updating the Mexican Official Standard 086-SCT-2-2023 for signaling and protection devices in roadwork areas, and evaluating NOM 036-SCT-2023 regarding emergency braking ramps on highways.

The system also worked on disseminating standards and manuals for federal highway design and conducted informative campaigns like "Safe Roads" to promote highway safety. During the Sixth Ordinary Session of the National System of Mobility and Road Safety, Fuentes Orrala emphasized the importance of addressing 163 action items within five key areas: mobility linked to territorial economic development, public transportation services, active mobility, road safety and gender inclusion.

At the Felipe Ángeles International Airport (AIFA), he added that short-term goals include promoting nationwide standardization of driver's licenses and developing intermodal cargo and passenger transportation projects. Victor Hugo Hofmann Aguirre, undersecretary of territorial, urban and housing planning at SEDATU, represented Secretary Edna Elena Vega Rangel in accepting the presidency.



Attendees of the March 12 SEDATU transfer ceremony.

He presented the 2025-2026 work plan, which focuses on coordinating government priority projects, particularly those connecting mobility and road safety with the Housing for Wellbeing program.

Hofmann Aguirre highlighted plans to improve connections between passenger train routes and other transportation modes as well as to link welfare centers with people, products and services.

Under the General Law of Mobility and Road Safety, the system's presidency rotates annually between SEDATU and SICT.

AIFA General Director Isidoro Pastor Román attended the event along with the head of the system's technical body, Janet de Luna Jiménez, who serves as SEDATU's general director of territorial policy and mobility. Federal and state officials and business representatives were also present. ■



Left to right: General Director of Federal Motor Carrier Luis Ruiz Hernández, SICT Undersecretary of Infrastructure Juan Carlos Fuentes Orrala and General Director of Territorial Planning Victor Hugo Hofmann Aguirre.

## Austin (Texas) CVE Unit Responds to Frame-Buckling Load Securement Issue

By **Sgt. Doug Floyd**, Commercial Vehicle Enforcement, Austin (Texas) Police Department

The Austin (Texas) Commercial Vehicle Enforcement (CVE) Unit responded to a call to assist patrol with a possible collision on I-35 southbound. When CVE officers arrived, they found no collision; instead, a load had shifted inside an 18-wheeler, causing the trailer to buckle and the frame to break.

The driver was coming from Mexico, hauling steel coils inside a box trailer with no securement devices holding the coils in place. While in traffic, the driver had to hit the brakes, causing the load to shift forward and hit the side and front of the trailer, causing the frame to fail.

CVE officers called for an "incident management tow," which involves extra equipment like forklifts, flatbed trailers and street sweepers to safely remove the load and damaged trailer off the highway. The incident blocked all but one lane for about three hours while the trailer was unloaded and moved to the tow yard. ■



## St. Louis (Missouri) County Police Department Ofc. David Rose Retires with 30 Years of Service

By **Kyle Jahns**, Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Unit, St. Louis (Missouri) County Police Department and **Jason Rappold**, Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Unit, St. Louis (Missouri) County Police Department

On Feb. 28, Ofc. David Rose retired from the St. Louis (Missouri) County Police Department (SLCPD) Commercial Vehicle Enforcement (CVE) Unit. Ofc. Rose had a 30-year career with the department, working in the Division of Patrol in various precincts, the Division of Special Operations in the K-9 and Highway Safety units, and the Division of Criminal Investigation as a detective in the Bureau of Crimes Against Persons.

Ofc. Rose was one of the founders of the SLCPD CVE Unit. To help establish the unit, Ofc. Rose worked with the supervisor of the Highway Safety Unit to gather all the required documentation and information needed to obtain authority from the Missouri State Highway Patrol for the local agency to conduct roadside inspections. He was instrumental in completing the Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program grant requirements with the Missouri Department of Transportation before becoming a unit member on Sept. 10, 2017.

At its humble beginnings, the SLCPD CVE Unit was composed of two full-time officers and two part-time officers under the supervision of the Highway Safety Unit. Ofc. Rose's dedication to the CVE Unit's focus on safety and compliance with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSR) greatly influenced the unit's success. His positive interactions with both industry and our state partners led to positive unit growth, with SLCPD's CVE Unit currently assigned six full-time inspection officers, one part-time inspection officer and a sergeant. The CVE Unit was separated from the



Ofc. David Rose faithfully served SLCPD for 30 years and helped to establish the department's CVE unit.

Highway Safety Unit and became a standalone unit in 2022.

Upon his well-earned retirement, Ofc. Rose was the team leader of the CVE Unit. He led the training of newly assigned officers, including the first sergeant of the unit, and provided consistent support for all operations conducted by the unit. His crowning achievement was the completion of the unit's handbook, which will forever be utilized by the unit's personnel. This 135-page handbook guides the officers to properly complete any inspection they may encounter while combining the FMCSRs, CVSA policies and

procedures, Missouri state statutes, and St. Louis County ordinances in one resource.

Ofc. Rose has made several professional contacts and relationships over the years while attending various CVSA events and training courses. These interactions have helped the unit and the officers improve as inspectors while providing an inspection product consistent with all our CVSA enforcement partners.

Ofc. Rose will be greatly missed. Enjoy your retirement, Dave, and thank you for your service. ■

# NORTH AMERICAN CARGO THEFT

## *Trends, Case Studies and Prevention*

*Best Practices for a Better Tomorrow*



Cargo theft remains a persistent threat to the commercial transportation industry and the broader North American economy. According to industry reports, criminal organizations continually refine their tactics to exploit vulnerabilities in the supply chain, making cargo theft an estimated \$15-35 billion problem annually.

For commercial motor vehicle (CMV) enforcement officers/inspectors and motor carriers, understanding these crimes and how to combat them is essential. In this article, we'll explore cargo theft trends, enforcement strategies, federal responses, and how officers and motor carriers can stay ahead of criminals exploiting North American roadways.

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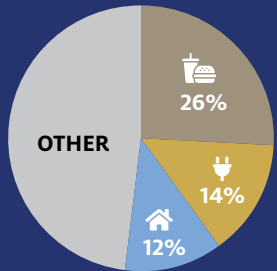
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# Cargo Theft BY THE NUMBERS



**Annual Cost of Cargo Theft:**  
Cargo theft costs U.S. businesses an estimated \$15-35 billion annually.

Source: National Insurance Crime Bureau,  
U.S. Homeland Security



**Most Stolen Cargo Types:**  
In the U.S., the most frequently stolen commodities include food and beverages (26%), electronics (14%), and household goods (12%).

Source: CargoNet 2023 Annual Report



**Rise in Cargo Theft:**  
In 2024, 3,625 reported cargo theft incidents occurred in North America, an increase of 27% compared to the previous year.

Source: CargoNet

## Understanding Cargo Theft

Cargo theft is a sophisticated and evolving crime that affects shippers, carriers and retailers nationwide. Criminals target high-value shipments, such as electronics, pharmaceuticals, apparel and food products. Stolen goods are often then resold on the black market or exported abroad. CargoNet reports that the average stolen shipment value exceeds \$280,000.

## Common Cargo Theft Methods

According to the FBI, the following are the most common types of cargo theft. [Read more at www.fbi.gov/investigate/transnational-organized-crime/cargo-theft](https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/transnational-organized-crime/cargo-theft).

⚠ **Straight cargo theft** occurs when cargo is physically stolen from its current location. Cargo thieves look for items they can steal and sell quickly. This frequently occurs at truck stops, parking lots, roadside parking, drop lots, rail yards and other situations where cargo is left unattended.

⚠ **Strategic cargo theft** occurs when thieves incorporate deceptive tactics to commit theft. This type of cargo theft involves the use of fraud to trick shippers, brokers and carriers into handing loads over to thieves instead of the legitimate carrier. Other current strategic cargo theft trends include identity theft, fictitious pick-ups, account takeovers, double brokering scams and fraudulent carriers – or any combination of these methods.

⚠ **Cyber cargo theft** occurs when basic cyberattacks are used to aid in cargo theft. Such attacks include phishing emails that install malware, granting thieves access to a company's systems to retrieve sensitive data. Thieves then use this information to print copies of legitimate shipping paperwork they can use to commit fictitious pick-ups.

⚠ **Pilferage cargo theft** occurs when criminals alter the bill of lading and pilfer small amounts off the vehicle.

Another form of cargo theft is **hijacking**, which involves thieves forcibly taking control of trucks by threatening or harming drivers.

Trend analysis concludes that strategic/fraud-based cargo theft is on the rise and criminals are getting more sophisticated. Through software and artificial intelligence, criminals can automate processes, analyze shipping papers and forge documents. Although straight theft still occurs frequently – mostly at truck stops and warehouses – strategic cargo theft is on the rise, and these schemes often bring in higher-value stolen cargo than straight thefts.

Cargo theft can occur anywhere, but the top U.S. states for cargo theft incidents are California, Texas and Illinois, together representing 46% of all theft in 2024, according to CargoNet. In Canada, Ontario and British Columbia report the highest rates of cargo theft. In Mexico, the México-Veracruz highway is the most dangerous route for cargo theft.



## How CMV Enforcement Officers Can Combat Cargo Theft

Cargo theft demands a proactive approach from enforcement officers. Recognizing red flags and employing best practices during inspections can significantly disrupt criminal operations.

### Recognizing Suspicious Behavior

- Note drivers who appear overly nervous, avoid eye contact or provide inconsistent details about their load.
- Look out for trailers with mismatched license plates or markings that do not align with shipping documents.
- Be aware of unusual security measures, such as excessive locks, makeshift repairs or tampered trailer seals.

### Conducting Thorough Inspections

- Verify shipping documents and compare them to the vehicle's actual cargo.
- Check for hidden compartments within trailers, cargo or sleeper berths.
- Use trained K-9 units when narcotics or contraband are suspected.
- Inspect electronic logs and driver records for inconsistencies in routes or travel times.

### Utilizing Technology

- License plate readers can identify stolen or suspicious vehicles.
- Use thermal imaging cameras to detect hidden compartments.
- Mobile data terminals can cross-check driver and vehicle records in real time.

### Coordinating with Other Agencies

- Work closely with federal and state/province/territory law enforcement to share intelligence and track stolen shipments.
- Leverage Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) databases to identify fraud and theft trends.
- Participate in industry-sponsored cargo theft task forces, facilitating joint operations and training.

## Preventative Measures for Drivers and Carriers

While law enforcement is crucial in addressing cargo theft, drivers and carriers must also take proactive security measures.

### Best Practices for Motor Carriers

- ✔ **Enhance Employee Training** – Educate drivers and staff on recognizing theft risks, verifying delivery locations and handling suspicious situations.
- ✔ **Implement Secure Parking Strategies** – Encourage drivers to use secured, well-lit parking facilities and avoid leaving trucks unattended in high-risk areas. Never leave loads unattended, especially in known cargo theft areas. If it's unavoidable to stage/drop a load, consider installing landing gear locks as well.
- ✔ **Utilize Advanced Security Technology** – Equip trucks and trailers with GPS tracking, real-time monitoring and geofencing alerts to enhance cargo protection.
- ✔ **Strengthen Cybersecurity Measures** – Protect dispatch and logistics systems from cyberattacks using multi-factor authentication, encryption and employee training on phishing scams.
- ✔ **Establish Strong Communication Channels** – Maintain open communication between dispatchers, drivers and law enforcement to respond quickly to theft incidents.
- ✔ **Develop Incident Response Plans** – Create clear protocols for drivers and dispatchers to follow in case of cargo theft, including immediate reporting to law enforcement and insurance providers.
- ✔ **Conduct Background Checks and Exercise Caution** – To minimize internal theft risks, vet employees, including drivers and warehouse personnel. When using online load boards, exercise increased caution and due diligence to verify the identities of people and companies with whom you have contracting arrangements.

By integrating these measures, motor carriers can significantly reduce their vulnerability to cargo theft, protecting their assets and the supply chain.

## Cargo Theft BY THE NUMBERS



### Time and Location of Thefts:

More than 60% of straight thefts occur in unsecured parking areas.

Mondays and Fridays show the highest concentration of cargo crime, with 29% of all cargo thefts occurring between midnight and 6 a.m.

*Source: FreightWatch International, Overhaul United States and Canada Annual Cargo Theft Report 2024*



### Law Enforcement Recoveries:

Approximately 25% of stolen cargo is recovered by law enforcement, though many incidents go unreported or remain unsolved.

*Source: NICB, CargoNet*



### Effectiveness of Security Measures:

Companies implementing GPS tracking, high-security locks and geofencing technology experience up to a 70% reduction in cargo theft incidents.

*Source: Transported Asset Protection Association*

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## North American Federal Responses to Cargo Theft

### **Canada's Approach to Preventing CMV Cargo Theft**

Cargo theft is a growing concern in Canada, particularly in high-traffic transportation corridors in Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec. According to an Overhaul cargo theft report, Ontario accounted for 85% of all reported cargo theft incidents in 2024. Although underreported, Canadian criminal networks frequently target CMVs, stealing high-value shipments, such as electronics (31% of cargo thefts), building/industrial sector/auto parts (17%), tobacco (7%), and food and drinks (7%). However, Canadian law enforcement agencies, industry associations and private security firms are actively working to combat this issue through coordinated initiatives and advanced security measures.

The Ontario Provincial Police, Sûreté du Québec (Quebec Safety) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police frequently work together to investigate major cargo theft rings. Police forces set up highway checkpoints in known cargo theft hotspots, checking documentation and inspecting suspicious CMVs. Law enforcement agencies conduct covert operations to recover stolen goods from warehouses and distribution centers where criminal organizations attempt to sell them. Technology and government/industry coordination assist in these operations; many Canadian trucking companies use GPS tracking and artificial intelligence to monitor freight movement and detect suspicious activity.

### **Cargo Theft Recovery in Canada**

#### **Project Big Rig**

In 2022, a joint operation by the Ontario Provincial Police, Peel Regional Police and Royal Canadian Mounted Police dismantled a sophisticated cargo theft ring responsible for stealing more than \$7 million in goods from CMVs across southern Ontario. The investigation led to multiple arrests, the recovery of stolen cargo and trucks/trailers and the disruption of a network linked to organized crime. The 15 arrests resulted in 73 charges for cargo theft and related offenses. Law enforcement recovered stolen goods valued at \$7 million and tractor-trailers worth about \$2.25 million, totaling around \$9.25 million in recovered property.

### **Mexico's Approach to Preventing CMV Cargo Theft**

Cargo theft – namely hijacking – is a significant concern in Mexico, with organized crime groups often targeting commercial shipments on major transportation routes. In 2024, 84% of thefts from carriers in Mexico involved violence. Interception of cargo units while in motion occurred in 71% of cases, while theft from parked units made up 28% of all thefts. More than 87% of the cargo thefts registered nationwide were concentrated in 10 states; 45% of the incidents occurred in Puebla (23%) and the State of Mexico (22%). However, the Mexican government has implemented several measures to combat this issue. March 2025 data show a 6.13% decrease in cargo theft across key states, including the State of Mexico, Michoacan, Nuevo Leon, Puebla and San Luis Potos.

### **FEDERAL AND STATE-LEVEL ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS AND TASK FORCES**

#### **National Guard and State Police Patrols**

– Mexico's National Guard, along with state and local law enforcement agencies, regularly patrol high-risk corridors, including those in the State of Mexico, Puebla, Guanajuato, Jalisco and Veracruz, where cargo theft is most prevalent. Tactical drones are used to identify stolen cargo from the air. Additionally, random and strategic checkpoints are used to monitor cargo transport, verify documentation and deter criminal activity.

Furthermore, an initiative by Mexico's National Guard, using the Balam strategy, focuses on the states and routes with the highest rates of cargo theft. The strategy includes the use of 450+ patrol cars, 37 drones, two helicopters, one aircraft and 23 investigation cells deployed across Mexico's federal highways. The plan has led to an 8.8% decrease in highway robbery, an increase of 24.2% in the recovery of stolen vehicles, the arrests of 33 people and the recovery of 77,000 gallons of stolen fuel.

#### **Registration of Vehicles Operating on Federal Roads**

– The Ministry of Infrastructure, Communications and Transport (SICT) and the General Directorate of Federal Motor Transport (DGAF) recently implemented a joint strategy to bolster safety on federal highways and bridges, where permit

holders must now register and identify vehicles operating on federal roads. The regulation mandates the placement of markings on transport units to promote safer, more organized circulation and reduce risks for transporters and highway users. **See page 21 for more information.**

#### **Specialized Unit for Combating Vehicle and Transportation Theft (Unidad Especializada en Combate al Robo de Vehículos y Transporte)**

– This specialized unit within Mexico's Attorney General's Office investigates cargo theft networks and coordinates with federal and local authorities to dismantle criminal operations.

### **USE OF TECHNOLOGY, TRACKING SYSTEMS AND PRIVATE SECURITY**

#### **GPS, Telematics and Panic Buttons**

– Many trucking companies in Mexico use GPS tracking and geofencing technology to monitor vehicle movements and detect unauthorized route deviations. Some fleets equip trucks with emergency alert systems that notify law enforcement in case of an attempted hijacking or theft.

#### **Blockchain and Electronic Invoicing**

**CFDI** – Mexico's Digital Tax Receipt Online (Comprobante Fiscal Digital por Internet, CFDI) system helps track shipments digitally, reducing fraud and illicit cargo transport.

#### **Escorted Shipments and Secure Rest Stops and Industrial Zones**

– High-value cargo shipments often employ armed private security escorts to deter theft attempts. Designated secure rest areas and logistics hubs offer safe parking for trucks, reducing the risk of theft in high-crime areas.

### **Cargo Theft Recovery in Mexico**

#### **Clothing and Shoe Shipment Recovery**

– In November 2024, a CMV was boarded with the intent of hijacking at the San Martín Texmelucan toll booth on the México-Veracruz highway. The driver pressed the panic button, and the motor carrier confirmed that someone other than the driver was driving the unit. The engine stop was activated, and authorities in the area were contacted and promptly responded, recovering the cargo.

## U.S. Approach to Preventing CMV Cargo Theft

The U.S. federal government employs a multifaceted approach to combat CMV cargo theft, involving legislative measures, regulatory actions and collaborative efforts.

- ✓ **Household Goods Shipping Consumer Protection Act** – This proposed bipartisan legislation aims to enhance FMCSA's authority to impose civil penalties against unauthorized brokers and mandates that companies in the household goods sector maintain a legitimate place of business. It also directs FMCSA to analyze trends among companies applying for shipping authority to identify fraudulent activity.
- ✓ **Safety Programs and Training** – Through the National Training Center and the federal training grant fulfilled by CVSA, FMCSA offers safety and criminal interdiction training for federal and state CMV enforcement personnel. Approximately 15,000 state law enforcement partners participate in these programs annually, which also includes the FMCSA Academy for newly hired safety investigators and border inspectors. Additionally, FMCSA has implemented measures to address fraud and identity theft in the trucking industry.

These efforts include comprehensive audits, establishing a dedicated fraud team and partnerships with identity verification companies to enhance the integrity of the registration system.

- ✓ **Operation Protect Your Load** – The first general freight broker initiative of its kind, Operation Protect Your Load – focused on violations of FMCSA's broker regulations – centers investigatory resources on broker entities with recent and repeated lapses in either insurance and bonding or repeated lapses in authority. This initiative provides guidance and resources to carriers, law enforcement agencies and drivers to prevent theft and improve response protocols. In November 2024, an enforcement blitz was performed in 17 states.
- ✓ **National Commercial Vehicle and Cargo Theft Prevention Task Force** – This task force facilitates collaboration among private industry, insurance companies, and federal, state and local governments to combat cargo theft. The goal is to disrupt and dismantle organizations responsible for theft and related violence in the American supply chain.

## Cargo Theft Recovery in the U.S.

- ✓ **Interstate Cargo Theft Ring Bust**  
Between 2012 and 2015, a Kentucky-based organization orchestrated a series of interstate cargo thefts across multiple states, including Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and North Carolina. The group targeted high-value merchandise, such as electronics, pharmaceuticals and cigarettes, stealing goods valued at more than \$30 million. The thieves typically worked in four-person crews with two crew members doing surveillance, a third breaking into the truck-tractor and starting it, and a fourth member driving away with the stolen load. Within 10 or 20 miles of the theft, the crew would separate the tractor from the trailer, attach their own tractor and drive away.

A load of cell phones valued at nearly \$12 million was stolen in Gary, Indiana, in 2013, which prompted an FBI investigation. The FBI put together the conspiracy case using truck stop surveillance video, bank records, rental car records, cell phone analysis, court-authorized wiretaps and confidential sources. A May 2015 sting operation involved a load of cell phones in Louisville, Kentucky, and the group was taken down. In May 2018, the FBI made 12 convictions, including the four leaders of the theft ring.

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***Trained K-9 units are used when narcotics or contraband are suspected.***

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

# 2025 State Crash Reconstruction Managers Annual Meeting

OCTOBER 21-23  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

For more info, go to  
[cvsa.org/events](https://cvsa.org/events).

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## North American Federal Responses to Cargo Theft

As criminals evolve their methods, law enforcement and industry leaders must continuously adapt. Emerging technologies, such as blockchain-based freight tracking, AI-driven threat detection and enhanced biometric driver identification, may help prevent cargo theft in the future.

Additionally, increased collaboration between public and private sectors will be essential in addressing these challenges. Federal initiatives, multi-agency task forces and North American collaborative initiatives will continue to play a vital role in securing our highways from cargo theft.

Cargo theft represents a significant threat to the integrity of the North American transportation system and economy. By staying informed, using advanced technology and fostering collaboration, enforcement officers and industry professionals can work together to mitigate risks and safeguard legitimate commerce. Through continued vigilance and innovation, the fight against cargo crime remains a top priority, ensuring the safety and security of North America's supply chain. ■



## Cargo Theft CASE STUDIES

These cases underscore the evolving tactics employed by cargo thieves, ranging from direct interception of freight to complex fraud schemes. The increasing frequency and sophistication of such incidents highlight the pressing need for enhanced security measures, industry collaboration and robust law enforcement efforts to safeguard North American supply chains.

**Holiday Toy Scam in the U.S.** – In October 2024, a London-based toy company fell victim to a sophisticated fraud operation resulting in the loss of more than \$1 million in holiday merchandise. Three truckloads of educational toy projectors destined for a distribution center in Atlanta, Georgia, were diverted, with two shipments rerouted to Los Angeles, California, and the third remained unaccounted. The perpetrators employed identity theft and double-brokering tactics, deceiving legitimate businesses into unwittingly participating in the scheme.

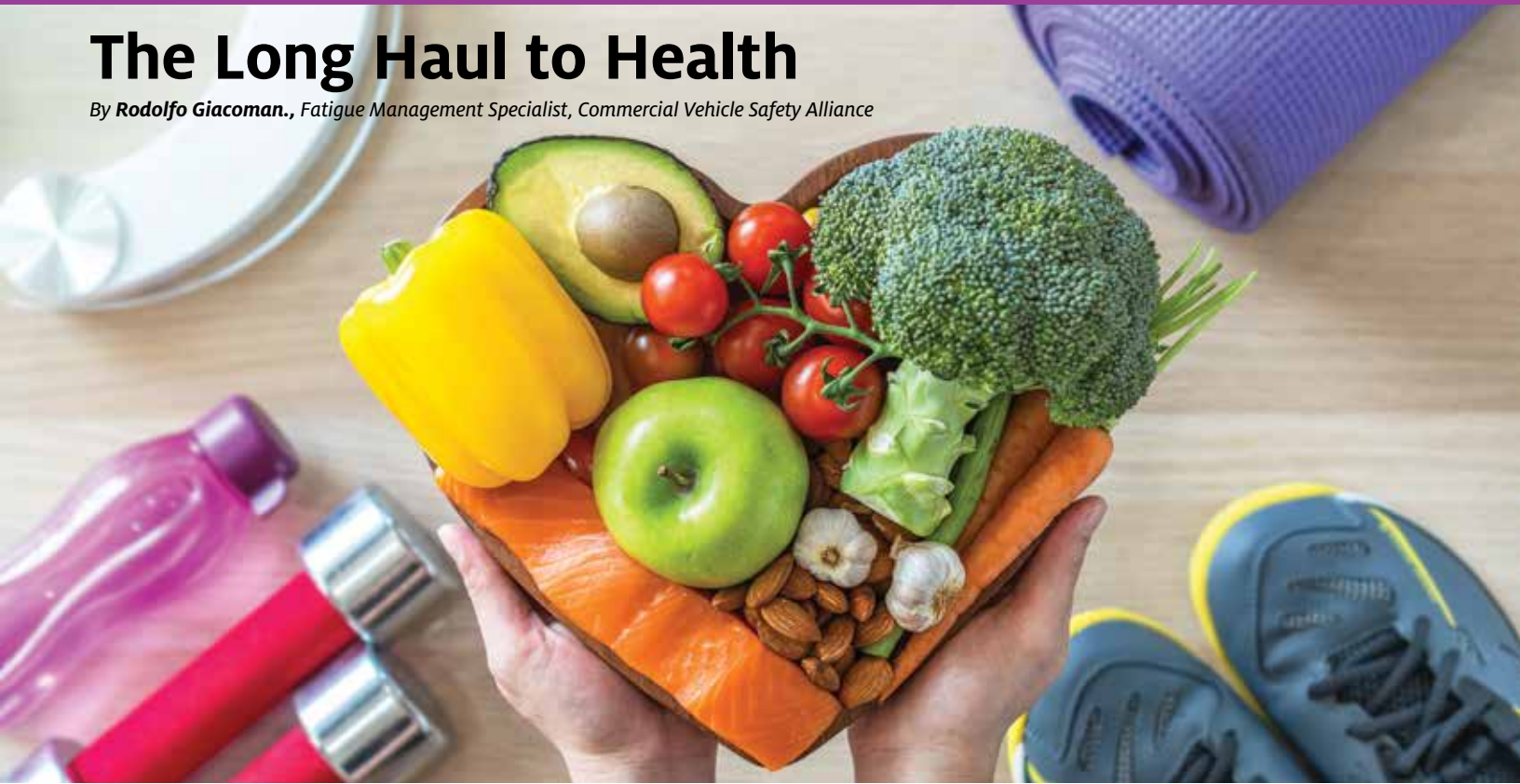
**Alberta Meat Theft** – In August 2020, a suspect used fraudulent documents to steal approximately \$230,000 worth of beef from a meatpacking plant in Brooks, Alberta. The individual arrived with a truck and trailer, presented false paperwork and departed with the stolen meat. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police linked the same fraudulent Quebec trucking company to the September 2020 theft of seven hot tubs from a manufacturer in Thorsby, Alberta. The meat and hot tubs were never recovered.

**High-Profile Hijackings in Mexico** – From 2020-2024, the following truck hijackings occurred in Mexico:

-  **June 2020:** \$17,000 of merchandise
-  **May 2020:** 300 drones
-  **January 2023:** \$100,000 of potato chips
-  **December 2023:** \$1 million of cell phones
-  **May 2024:** Unknown amount of soap
-  **August 2024:** Unknown amount of beer

# The Long Haul to Health

By **Rodolfo Giacoman**, Fatigue Management Specialist, Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance



Four years ago, when I turned 51, a congenital heart defect caught up with me that required open heart surgery. Part of the surgery preparations included visiting my primary doctor, who has known me for decades. As he was writing up the litany of lab tests, I asked if he had any words of wisdom as to anything I could do before the surgery, expecting his usual lifestyle recommendations on a particular exercise, food or anything else that may have given me a leg up on a successful surgery outcome. He said, "Put your affairs in order, Rodolfo. Don't leave a mess to your wife."

While I do not wish what happened to me on anyone, the process of putting my affairs in order proved to be the most sobering and life-motivational exercise ever. It made instantly clear to me what parts of life were important and those that were not. Right at the top, the obvious winner of what is important to me in life is time – the time we have left to live.

That is why it makes me chuckle when I read about the debate on which is more important between lifespan (the years in your life) and healthspan (the life in your years). It is a false dichotomy because you cannot have health without life. But the point of these debates is worth considering. Quality of life may be as important as longevity. Chronic illnesses and disabilities due to metabolic disorders may reduce not only your drivers' ability to operate productively but also their quality of life to the point where life may no longer be enjoyable.

## The Limits of Life Extension

Despite billions spent on anti-aging research and countless products claiming to extend life, the science is clear: Extraordinary longevity is primarily genetic. While treatments may address specific conditions, they rarely extend the maximum lifespan by a significant amount. Those who live past 100 typically carry genetic variants that protect against age-related diseases and promote cellular health.

In the Q4 2023 "Guardian" article "The Alertness Equation: How Positive Relationships Add Up," I mentioned the famous "Blue Zones" highlighted in the popular Netflix series – regions where people reportedly live extraordinarily long lives. Recent reports have uncovered record-keeping irregularities in these areas that may explain the seemingly impossible longevity claims. Despite these questions, the lifestyle recommendations from Blue Zone studies remain sound and concur with the North American Fatigue Management Program's (NAFMP) five keys to wellness: nutrition, exercise, strong social connections, stress management and sleep hygiene.

## Understanding Metabolism and Its Disorders

In February, CVSA held a webinar titled "Fueling Success: CMV Driver Nutrition, Statins and GLP-1 Receptor Agonists" as part of the NAFMP Driver Series. (You may watch the recording at [nafmp.org/webinars](https://nafmp.org/webinars)). During the webinar, I discussed metabolism, which

refers to all chemical processes that maintain life within our bodies, particularly how we convert food into energy. Metabolic disorder occurs when these processes malfunction, often manifesting as insulin resistance – a condition where cells refuse to respond to insulin signals.

Insulin resistance can affect any organ in the body, not just the pancreas or liver. At its core, this is a mitochondrial problem – the cellular "power plants" become damaged and inefficient, directly influenced by our dietary choices. When mitochondria cannot properly process the fuel we give them, cells become energy-starved despite abundant calories.

## Nutrition's Critical Role

As discussed during the webinar and also emphasized in the Q2 2023 "Guardian" articles "Good Nutrition is High-Quality Fuel for Driver Alertness" and "Debunking 10 Nutrition Myths," nutrition plays a central role in preventing or improving metabolic syndrome. This cluster of conditions – including high blood pressure, high blood sugar, excess abdominal fat and abnormal cholesterol levels – dramatically increases the risk for heart disease, stroke, diabetes and polycystic ovarian syndrome.

Contrary to decades of health advice, low-fat diets aren't the answer. The real culprit is excessive sugar consumption, particularly

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carbohydrates without fiber. When we consume refined carbohydrates, our bodies experience rapid blood sugar spikes followed by insulin surges. Over time, this pattern damages cellular energy production and promotes inflammation throughout the body.

## Understanding Dietary Fats

Not all fats are created equal. Here are the seven different types:

1. **Omega-3 fatty acids:** Found in fish and some vegetables, these fats are anti-inflammatory and heart-healthy.
2. **Monounsaturated fatty acids:** Found in olive and avocado oil, these fats are good for the liver and can help maintain healthy cholesterol levels.
3. **Polyunsaturated fatty acids:** Found in nuts, seeds and some seafood, these fats can help lower LDL cholesterol and support cell membrane health.
4. **Saturated fat:** Found in meats and dairy, this fat may be neutral for cardiovascular health and diabetes for most but not all people.
5. **Medium-chain triglycerides:** Found in coconut oil, these fats are vegan and can be unhealthy if mixed with lots of saturated fat.
6. **Omega-6 fatty acids:** Found in highly processed seed oils like corn, cottonseed and soybean, these fats may drive inflammation.
7. **Trans fats:** These fats are considered the worst type of fat.

## Monitoring Nutritional Health

How do you know if you're eating well enough? Below are simple biomarkers of good nutrition. Check them upon awakening or after emptying your bladder. These should stay the same or be reduced a little:

- **Waist circumference (measure at your belly button):** This is a measure of your visceral fat and a marker of insulin resistance.
- **Blood pressure:** This is a measure of the elasticity of your blood vessels.
- **Resting heart rate:** This is a measure of your circulatory effectiveness.

Blood work indicators include:

- **Lipid panel:** Triglycerides/HDL cholesterol ratio is a marker of metabolic syndrome.
- **Comprehensive metabolic panel:** Alanine Transaminase is a liver enzyme that measures the degree of liver fat.
- **Hemoglobin A1C:** This is a marker of diabetes.
- **Uric acid:** This is another marker for fatty liver.
- **Complete blood count panel:** These are markers for a wide range of conditions, including anemia and infection.
- **Inflammatory markers:** These, such as C-reactive protein, may indicate signs of diseases, such as infections, auto-immune conditions and cancers.

- **Vitamin and mineral levels:** Your medical provider may suggest checking B-12, vitamin D, folate, ferritin, etc.

Other tests for cardiovascular disease include:

- Heart CT scan: Coronary artery calcium scan (calcium score test)
- Carotid ultrasound
- Magnetic resonance angiography
- Cardiac catheterization

## The Leading Causes of Death

The top ten causes of death in the U.S. for 2022 reveal how metabolic syndrome underlies most of our mortality. Heart disease, cancer, COVID-19, accidents, stroke, chronic respiratory diseases, Alzheimer's, diabetes, kidney disease and suicide make up this sobering list. Of these, at least six have strong connections to metabolic health.

## Assessing Cardiovascular Risk

Physicians use tools like the American Heart Association's PREVENT calculator to assess cardiovascular risk ([www.professional.heart.org/en/guidelines-and-statements/prevent-calculator](http://www.professional.heart.org/en/guidelines-and-statements/prevent-calculator)). This algorithm considers factors we can relatively control (blood pressure, cholesterol levels, diabetes status, smoking) and those we definitely cannot (age, sex, genetic background). The resulting score helps determine whether medications like statins or GLP-1 receptor agonists might be beneficial.

The interpretation of risk estimates for primary prevention patients (those without existing coronary heart disease, stroke or heart failure) between ages 30-79 years categorizes 10-year cardiovascular disease risk as:

- Low risk (<5%)
- Borderline risk (5% to 7.4%)
- Intermediate risk (7.5% to 19.9%)
- High risk (≥20%)

## Understanding Atherosclerosis

Atherosclerosis begins with damage to artery walls caused by high cholesterol, high blood pressure, smoking, diabetes, inflammation and oxidative stress. Once the artery wall is damaged, substances like cholesterol, fat and calcium accumulate at the site, forming plaque. As plaque builds up, it narrows arteries, making blood flow increasingly difficult.



## The Role of Statins

Statins reduce cardiovascular disease risk by lowering LDL cholesterol levels and potentially reducing inflammation. They are generally safe, though side effects can include muscle pain, digestive problems and liver issues. In rare cases, statins can cause serious problems like muscle damage and kidney failure. They may slightly increase Type 2 diabetes risk, primarily in those already predisposed. Common statins include Atorvastatin (Lipitor), Fluvastatin (Lescol), Lovastatin (Mevacor), Pitavastatin (Livalo), Pravastatin (Pravachol), Rosuvastatin (Crestor) and Simvastatin (Zocor).

## Cholesterol's Complex Role

Is high cholesterol a necessary and sufficient cause of cardiovascular events? It's neither. A significant percentage of people suffering from cardiovascular events have normal cholesterol levels, and some people with high cholesterol never develop cardiovascular disease. While cholesterol is an important factor in cardiovascular disease, it's just one piece of a complex puzzle.

## Problems With Statin Usage

Many people taking statins probably shouldn't be – those with only high LDL cholesterol but no other risk factors.

Conversely, many who should take statins don't (or cannot afford them), including those with genetic predisposition, high blood pressure, smoking habits, high alcohol consumption, sedentary lifestyle, chronic stress, malnutrition and diabetes.

## GLP-1 Receptor Agonists

GLP-1 receptor agonists are medications used to treat Type 2 diabetes and obesity. They mimic the hormone glucagon-like peptide-1, which is naturally released after eating. These medications offer several benefits for blood sugar control and weight management.

Common GLP-1 receptor agonists include:

- **Dulaglutide:** Trulicity (diabetes and weight loss)
- **Exenatide:** Byetta (diabetes)
- **Exenatide Extended Release:** Bydureon BCise (diabetes)
- **Liraglutide:** Victoza (diabetes), Saxenda (weight loss)
- **Lixisenatide:** Adlyxin (diabetes)
- **Semaglutide:** Ozempic (diabetes), Rybelsus (diabetes), Wegovy (weight loss)
- **Tirzepatide:** Mounjaro (diabetes and weight loss)

These medications work by stimulating insulin secretion from the pancreas, suppressing glucagon release, slowing gastric emptying and increasing feelings of fullness.

Side effects can include:

- Starvation-like effects, including loss of both muscle and fat
- Muscle loss potentially leading to sarcopenia
- Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea
- Rare but serious issues like pancreatitis, gallbladder problems, thyroid tumors and gastroparesis
- Effects on reward signaling that impact eating, sex, social interaction, learning and motivation and may also influence addiction and depression

As with statins, there are usage problems:

- Many who should take them (those with diabetes or morbid obesity) don't, often due to cost.
- Many who shouldn't take them do, including those seeking weight loss without medical necessity, those at risk for sarcopenia, those using non-FDA approved compounded versions or those using dosing that is not directed by a physician.

## The Most Important Reminders for You and Your Drivers

Please check with a medical professional before making any changes to medications and lifestyle. If you or your drivers are unsatisfied with a doctor's recommendations, seek a second opinion.

Finally, try not to stress or obsess about food and health. The stress hormone cortisol also causes fat storage and promotes visceral fat accumulation, leading to metabolic disease. If you occasionally overindulge, that's okay – just don't overindulge at breakfast, lunch and dinner and every single day. Instead of self-criticism, focus that energy on getting back on track. Remember to practice the NAFMP five keys to wellness mentioned earlier. Drivers can learn about them by taking NAFMP Module 3 at [lms.nafmp.org](https://lms.nafmp.org).

Valuing driver health isn't just about safety and productivity; it's about investing in the healthspan – the quality years – of the most important asset in your company: your people. Please keep well, safe and alert. ■

*Which is more important, lifespan or healthspan? It is a false dichotomy because you cannot have health without life.*

## Salvador Monroy, Mexico's Longest-Serving Transportation Diplomat

By **Rodolfo Giacoman**, *Fatigue Management Specialist, Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance*

Shortly after turning 70, Salvador Monroy retired on March 15, concluding a remarkable 23-year tenure as Mexico's ambassador for its commercial motor vehicle (CMV) regulatory agency and a 41-year career with Mexico's Department of Transportation, where he once served as chief of staff for the secretary of transportation. In Mexico, such positions typically change every six years with each new presidential administration. Yet Salvador maintained his role as the director of international affairs of the Secretariat of Infrastructure, Communications and Transportation General Directorate of Federal Motor Transport (SICT-DGAF) through five different administrations from three different political parties. If you think his career longevity suggests he did something right, you would be correct. He did many, many things right.

### Curious, Truthful and Responsive

I met Salvador Monroy in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, at the 2002 Annual International Conference of the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators. After the day's meetings, we dined inside a bus that had been converted into a restaurant.

From that first conversation, Salvador struck me as remarkably curious. He never feigned knowledge and possessed a genuine hunger for understanding CMV transportation in the U.S. and Canada and the roles of the various stakeholders involved.

Even now, speaking with Salvador is refreshing because he avoids assumptions. He asks incisive questions that lead to the resolution of any issue at hand. Every task and project I had the opportunity to work on with him was addressed promptly, directly and methodically. He served as a reliable Mexican representative not only to CVSA but to all CMV-related governmental organizations in North America. You could always count on him to answer the phone and take appropriate action on any matter.

### Degrees in Communications, Foreign Trade and Education

Born in Mexico City, Mexico, Salvador earned a bachelor's degree in communication sciences from the National Autonomous University of Mexico and served as spokesperson for the Mexico City Philharmonic Orchestra, reflecting his passion for music. Once, at a work lunch

in Austin, Texas, I watched him captivate the group by identifying every song played with the detailed knowledge of a music professor. He furthered his education, obtaining a master's degree in foreign trade in 2007 and a master's degree in education in 2018, both from the University of the Valley of Mexico (UVM), where he dedicated over 15 years to teaching postgraduate and undergraduate students in subjects ranging from leadership and negotiation to organization design and top management. He also served as secretary of the Executive Bachelor's Degree Academy at the UVM San Angel campus from January 2017 to August 2019.

### Physical Strength

Over the past two decades, Salvador and I have met at numerous conferences across North America. During our initial meeting in Saskatoon, I used to run daily, and he joined me for what he declared was his last run. He revealed his true passions were tennis and squash. Despite being 15 years my senior, I couldn't keep up with him in either sport, so we settled on racquetball. For several years, finding a racquetball court became a regular part of our work travel when attending CMV conferences.

Now that Salvador is retired, he enjoys long bike rides with his wife and friends on weekends and during overseas trips. Since I met him, he has regularly risen before dawn to meditate and practice yoga.

### Significant Accomplishments

During his long tenure at Mexico's CMV transportation agency, Salvador collaborated with his counterparts in the U.S. and Canada on opening the border to Mexican trucking. Following a commercial dispute requiring a panel resolution and two pilot programs in which he actively participated, this effort culminated in the liberalization of these services in 2015 under the North American Free Trade Agreement. Furthermore, he contributed to the negotiation of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement in 2017 and 2018, serving on the Cross-Border Trade in Services working group and reaching an agreement on establishing its Transportation Committee.

### Tactfulness, Finesse and Savoir Faire

Salvador's diplomatic skills are innate and central to his personality. He is also remarkably quick-witted, often engaging in playful banter before serious discussion and delighting in double entendres. Conversations with him invariably involve outbursts of laughter.



Salvador at the Canadian Council of Motor Transportation Administrators annual meeting in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 2012.

Salvador possesses the ability to connect with anyone at any level. I have observed him expertly navigate a room, much like a seasoned politician. He represented Mexico with dignity and integrity in challenging situations, understanding the delicate balance of power and transportation infrastructure among the three North American nations.

### CVSA President Award

CVSA Past President Colonel Russ Christoferson emphasized the distinct honor of selecting his recipient for the CVSA President's Award, noting that Salvador immediately came to mind as someone who made significant contributions to CVSA. Salvador's active involvement, both in person and virtually, providing crucial updates on Mexico's safety initiatives and participating in CVSA enforcement events, alongside his work with the U.S. and Canada to enhance driver and vehicle inspection processes, proved invaluable. This cooperative relationship strengthened CVSA's impact across North America, and the organization expressed its gratitude for Salvador's participation and knowledge as he joined the esteemed group of CVSA President's Award honorees in 2024.

### A Real Friend

Salvador and I share a love for coffee, though while I am sensitive to caffeine, he seems to have an extraordinary tolerance. I've seen him order a regular coffee with four extra espresso shots and ice, a concoction that makes me feel jittery just watching him drink it. However, our conversations over those coffees are treasures I hold dearly.

Salvador has imparted valuable life lessons, not only about work but also about navigating family and life with wisdom. He generously offered personal support during my travels to Mexico and assistance in finding accommodations.

Salvador is blessed with a wonderful family and possesses a unique generosity. While we don't exchange gifts regularly – and I tend to avoid accumulating possessions – I made an exception for a very special gift from Salvador several years ago: an original binder from his time with the Mexico City Philharmonic Orchestra.

It sits on a bookshelf beside my desk, a constant reminder of Salvador, our friendship and the potential for collaboration between the people of North America. ■



Salvador at a restaurant in Mexico City, Mexico, in 2015.



Salvador and his family in Washington, D.C., in 2008.



Salvador's gift to Rodolfo, su carpeta de la Orquesta Filarmónica de la Ciudad de México (his Mexico City Philharmonic Orchestra binder).

## Road Dog Trucking Goes Live on Air at CVSA Workshop

Dave Nemo, host of Sirius XM Radio show Road Dog Trucking, and Russell Wolff, production assistant, appeared on site at the 2025 CVSA Workshop in New Orleans, Louisiana, to talk with CVSA leadership and staff about various CVSA events, initiatives and programs.



Kansas Highway Patrol Tpr. Nick Wright, vice chair of CVSA's Cooperative Hazardous Materials Enforcement Development Program, was on-air to discuss hazardous materials.



Jonathan Nicastro, director of the Motor Carrier Compliance Bureau with the New York State Department of Transportation, talked about CVSA's Operation Safe Driver Program, which he chairs.



CVSA Director of Communications Nicole Leandro (center) organized the interviews and topics and had a great time on set with Dave Nemo (right) and Russell Wolff (left).



Kimberly Hill (right), inspector with the Indiana State Police and secretary of CVSA's Human Trafficking Prevention Program, along with CVSA Director of Enforcement Programs Jake Elovirta (middle), shared with Dave Nemo (left) the indicators to look for and what to do if you suspect someone is being trafficked.



CVSA President Capt. John Hahn with the Colorado State Patrol talked about the board and leadership opportunities within the Alliance.



CVSA's International Roadcheck was the topic discussed during Sgt. Gregory Handy's radio segment. Sgt. Handy, with the Louisiana State Police, serves as chair of the International Roadcheck Program.



Tom Bray, senior industry business advisor with J. J. Keller & Associates and secretary of CVSA's Operation Airbrake Program, discussed CVSA's Brake Safety Week.



Oklahoma Highway Patrol Lt. Ron Jenkins, chair of the CVSA Training Committee, talked about training.



Dave Nemo (left) interviewed CVSA's 2022 International Driver Excellence Award winner Ruth McDonough (right) of Hittman Transportation Services and CVSA Fatigue Management Specialist Rodolfo Giacoman (middle) about the award program.

The interviews were recorded live from the workshop, with the buzz of the event audible in the background. CVSA sincerely appreciates the preparation, knowledge and professionalism of the participants. Thank you to Road Dog Trucking for agreeing to broadcast from our event and being so welcoming and gracious to our members. It was a great experience for everyone involved. ■



# INSPECTOR'S CORNER

## Honoring Our Role Models by Preparing to Fill Their Shoes

By **Ofc. Jared Koester**, Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Unit, Fort Worth (Texas) Police Department;  
North American Inspectors Championship Jimmy K. Ammons Grand Champion

When I first transitioned to the commercial vehicle enforcement (CVE) unit, I was by far one of the youngest inspectors in my area. It did not take long for me to realize the important role some of the older and more tenured inspectors play in being leaders and mentors to us younger folks. I was surrounded by a great group of role models who not only shared their knowledge as inspectors but also taught me the importance of stepping into leadership positions whenever the opportunity presents itself. I, and anyone else of the "younger" generation who reads this, may not always think of ourselves as the current leaders or role models because, at the moment, other people are assuming those roles. Although these leadership and mentor roles may seem to be filled now, the people holding these positions aren't going to stick around forever. As the newer generation, we need to be prepared for the day when our mentors retire and leave us to take their place.

I hadn't ever spent much time really considering this, even though I frequently hear my coworkers discussing how many months or years (in single digits) they have left until retirement. The reality of this didn't truly set in until about two weeks ago when I got a call from a good friend and fellow inspector from the Frisco (Texas) Police Department, Tom Mrozinski (known to many of us as "Moe"), who shared the news that he was retiring that month. I'd like to take a moment to share a little about him in recognition of his decades of service to CVE and law enforcement as a whole.

Moe is credited with leading the CVE unit within the Frisco (Texas) Police Department, as well as implementing the start-up of multiple CVE units in other cities in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Moe served as the CVSA local member president and was the first local member to attain the position of CVSA program chairman. He also serves on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Minimum Model Uniform Crash Criteria Committee and the Advisory Committee on Underride Protection. Moe has been instrumental in aligning the City of Frisco and the autonomous vehicle industry by helping developers program the vehicles to respond appropriately to first responder vehicles. Moe has been an incredible mentor to me and an example to everyone around him. He played a massive role in the enforcement industry and

within CVSA, creating lasting impacts, and he will be missed. Learning of Moe's retirement was when it really hit me that the people we look up to now are the people who will one day leave behind big shoes that we need to be ready to fill.

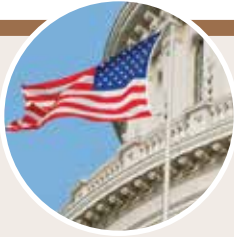
As the older generation of inspectors leave, it is up to us to continue improving upon their work and be the leaders and role models for the next generation of inspectors. Whether it's taking a leadership role within your agency, mentoring a newer inspector or participating as a member of a CVSA committee, I'd encourage you to take that opportunity and make the

most of it. Everything we do is done with the same goal in mind: reducing crashes and making our roadways safer. There are countless improvements, changes, etc., that present and past leaders have spearheaded – and before we know it, it will be our turn to take over and continue improving the foundation built by those before us.

As always, take care of each other and make sure everyone goes home at the end of the day. Have fun, enjoy the job you do and be safe. Be like Moe and Safety Sammy. And most of all, **HAPPY RETIREMENT, MOE! ■**



Moe and his best bud, Safety Sammy.



# THE LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY RUNDOWN

By **Adrienne Gildea**, CAE, Deputy Executive Director, Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance

## Improving CMV Safety by Effectively Preparing Motor Carriers

At the end of 2024, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration released encouraging crash data, reporting that traffic fatalities declined 4.4% in the first three quarters of that year, completing the 10th consecutive quarter with a decline in fatalities. In addition, the agency had earlier reported a slight decrease (1%) in commercial motor vehicle (CMV) crashes from 2022 to 2023.

CVSA's legislative recommendations seek to build upon this recent success to further decrease traffic fatalities involving large trucks and buses. CVSA proposes a number of improvements to the Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations that will result in safer vehicles, drivers and motor carriers on our shared roadways. While all of the recommendations are geared toward improving CMV safety, I want to highlight a specific position that, if included in the next surface transportation authorization, will make significant progress toward our shared goal of zero CMV-related roadway deaths.

CVSA is calling upon the U.S. Congress to require the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to establish minimum qualification standards for entry as a motor carrier. Currently, very little is required to become a motor carrier and receive authority to operate in commerce in the U.S. Meanwhile, CMV inspectors and enforcement personnel must be trained and certified to conduct inspections, and CMV drivers must go through rigorous entry-level driver training and be properly credentialed to drive a CMV. However, motor carriers applying for a USDOT number do not have to demonstrate any understanding of the regulations in order to enter the industry.

This oversight allows motor carriers to begin operation without the knowledge needed to establish and maintain a strong safety culture. Motor carriers are often left to figure it out for themselves, learning through trial and error, often in the form of failed inspections, safety audits and compliance reviews. This is reactive at best and allows ill-prepared carriers to operate on our roadways until they catch the attention of enforcement.

It is critical that motor carriers operating in commerce understand what is required, how to comply with the federal regulations and how to establish a strong safety culture within their operations *before* they put drivers behind the wheel and begin hauling loads. The vast majority of motor carriers seeking to enter the industry want to do so safely, and it is the regulators' responsibility to ensure they have the tools and knowledge necessary to do so.

Establishing minimum qualification standards for entry as a motor carrier would also help reduce the number of "chameleon carriers" who use the current system to shed unflattering safety records and begin operations under a new USDOT number far too easily. The additional work necessary to meet the standards, as well as the additional oversight necessary to manage the program, would disincentive the reincarnation process and help regulators more quickly identify instances of fraud.

Finally, establishing the qualification standards would benefit the New Entrant Safety Assurance Program. Currently, the program is tasked with identifying motor carriers who lack necessary safety management controls and assisting them with getting on the right path forward. But the

At the CVSA Workshop in New Orleans, Louisiana, earlier this year, the CVSA Board of Directors approved the final round of legislative policy recommendations developed by the Alliance's Reauthorization Task Force. For a full list of CVSA's reauthorization priorities, visit [www.cvsa.org/policy/reauthorization](http://www.cvsa.org/policy/reauthorization).

program, which was originally intended to be supportive and educational, has devolved into a punitive program. If motor carriers were first required to demonstrate an understanding of their safety responsibilities – before being permitted to operate in commerce – the New Entrant Safety Assurance Program could be focused on evaluating the safety performance of motor carriers who have met the qualification standards and have been in operation for a short time, and, for those who need it, identifying weaknesses and tailoring education for the motor carriers on a more personalized basis.

Establishing these standards and managing oversight of such a program is no small task. Development of the qualification standards themselves and the evaluation process will require input from across the CMV stakeholder community. And resources will certainly be necessary to support the agency as it administers the program going forward. However, the benefits of ensuring that motor carriers who operate CMVs on our roadways are equipped to do so safely are clear. The Alliance will take this message up to Capitol Hill, along with our other recommendations, in hopes that the next surface transportation reauthorization takes significant strides forward when it comes to CMV safety. ■

# Transport Canada's Driver Distraction Mitigation Program

By **Pierre Thiffault, Ph.D.**, Senior Research Analyst, Multi-Modal and Road Safety Programs, Transport Canada, Government of Canada



Driver distraction remains a safety issue in the motor carrier industry. Consequently, Transport Canada is now offering, free of charge, a comprehensive distraction mitigation program tailored for Canadian motor carriers. Based on a scientific approach to distraction mitigation and driver training, the program is intended to curb commercial motor vehicle (CMV) crashes related to distraction.

The Driver Distraction Mitigation Program (DDMP) includes driver training modules and a set of guidelines for transport companies to implement a comprehensive program that addresses driver distraction. All material is available in English and French.

## A Bit of Context

Road safety practitioners consider that crashes, for all road users, result from an interaction between factors related to the road environment, the vehicle and the driver. It is also now common knowledge that the critical reasons behind 80-90% of road crashes are linked to driver issues. The idea here is not to blame the drivers or to assign fault but rather to develop and implement targeted solutions directed at this part of the equation. In this respect, it is important to emphasize that, given their organizational

nature, motor carriers present an optimal context to implement driver-focused interventions derived from the fields of human factors and traffic psychology. See "Addressing human factors in the motor carrier industry in Canada" at [www.ccmta.ca/web/default/files/PDF/human-factors\\_report\\_May\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ccmta.ca/web/default/files/PDF/human-factors_report_May_2011.pdf).

The traditional "driver factors" classification used in most crash causation studies refers to recognition, decision, performance and non-performance factors. The results of these studies invariably indicate that recognition and decision factors are the leading causes of crashes, including those conducted in the motor carrier industry. Recognition factors relate to the intake of information by the driver, which includes perception and attention processes. Attention deficiencies, also referred to as inattention, are caused either by fatigue (hypovigilance) or by driver distraction (multitasking).

Attention is a single-channel process; it can be compared to a single beam of light that a driver successively directs towards various aspects of the driving task and the road environment. The effect of fatigue can be illustrated by a dimming of this beam of light; as fatigue progresses and alertness decreases, the intensity of the light fades away.

The beam can be oriented correctly, at the proper components of the task, but it is getting weaker, creating issues such as missed signals, increased reaction times, decreased visual scanning and lower situational awareness.

Distraction is a different form of inattention. Here the beam of light may remain consistent and strong, but it is not aimed properly at the key requirements of the driving task. The effects of distraction on performance can be comparable to those of fatigue, but both phenomena are explained by different mechanisms and call for different driver-focused countermeasures.

Driver distraction occurs when there is a mismatch between a driver's current attentional resources and those necessary to safely operate the vehicle. In other words, distracted driving happens when a driver is unable to safely operate the vehicle because their attentional capacity is exceeded or diverted while engaging in a secondary task. Driving-related tasks that necessitate drivers' eyes to be momentarily off the road are also considered as distractions that can cause safety incidents.

*Continued on next page*

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## Commercial Motor Vehicle Driver Distraction

In general, risk increases with exposure to hazards. With distraction, risk will vary according to type (visual, manual or mental), timing, duration, frequency and intensity of the distractions. Experts agree that risk exposure is currently increasing in the population as sources of distractions accumulate. With the introduction of infotainment systems, on-board safety systems and the use of personal electronic devices by road users, the driving task has become more complex, and the pressure on drivers' attention is considered an increasing and critical safety issue. This situation is even more significant for CMV drivers, where the driving task is characterized by a heavier mental workload than that of general road users. As a result, CMV driver distraction comes out as a key crash causation factor in national collision databases and field studies.

A recent field study titled "Assessment of the Prevalence, Nature and Risk of Distracted Driving Among Large Truck Drivers in Canada: A Naturalistic Driving Study" reveals that CMV driver distraction remains a problem. The results of this study suggest that current regulations may not be sufficient to eliminate visual and manual interactions with personal electronic devices while driving. An excerpt states, "While most drivers mounted their wireless devices, as specified in the regulation, they were still interacting with the mounted device, which this report shows significantly increases the odds of being involved in a safety critical event." The authors recommended that driver distraction regulations be complemented by more comprehensive driver training focused on distraction mitigation as well as the implementation of fleet-based policies and programs.

Tailored driver training for distraction mitigation has indeed been identified as a sound strategy to address the problem. Scientific models suggest that drivers are not simply passively responding to demands of the driving task and competing activities but that they are actively controlling the mechanisms that create the distractions that they experience. Drivers in fact decide how they distribute their attention and how they choose to engage in secondary tasks while

driving. In other words, there is a decision-making component in driver distraction, and if drivers were made to better understand the mechanisms of attention as well as the risks associated with multitasking while driving, this could improve this decision-making. Drivers would be more efficient at self-regulating their attention, and they would become more strategic with the timing of secondary task engagement.

Fleet-based distraction mitigation programs are also recommended in the literature. For example, employers can:

- Limit the availability of distracting technologies and devices
- Provide drivers with vehicles equipped with technologies designed to minimize distraction
- Implement clear policies to limit exposure to distractors
- Identify when it is acceptable and when it is prohibited to engage in distracting activities
- Offer education and training to teach drivers how to self-regulate behavior with regards to driver distraction
- Explain the risks associated with the different types of distractors
- Provide guidance as to how this risk can be mitigated
- Implement a safety culture where distraction mitigation is a company top priority

## The Driver Distraction Mitigation Program

In terms of driver distraction, Transport Canada's key activities are centered on working with the industry and international stakeholders to make sure that on-board displays and various technologies that communicate information to the driver are developed and tested on the basis of sound human factors principles, in order to increase their efficiency and minimize inattention to the road scene.

While this work is essential, a scientific assessment specifically focused on distraction in the motor carrier industry reveals that more can be done in this context, especially in terms of providing CMV drivers with comprehensive distraction mitigation training

and transport companies with guidelines to increase their efficiency in dealing with this issue. These two strategies are at the core of Transport Canada's new program.

Transport Canada worked with a team of experts from Virginia Tech Transport Institute to develop the DDMP. The project included:

- A review of the scientific literature covering distraction and driver training
- An assessment of what should be included in driver training and fleet guidelines to mitigate distraction
- A gap analysis based on a review of existing driver distraction training programs
- Developing new training and fleet guidelines
- Testing the material with focus groups
- Refining and finalizing the material based on the test

The program consists of the following:

- Three driver distraction training modules are available in English and French, either with recorded voice-over for self-administration or written narration notes for fleets that want to use an instructor. More specifically, the package includes two 45-minute training versions – one for fleets that allow the use of hands-free phones and one for fleets that do not, as well as a short refresher course.
- A report presents a set of guidelines for transport companies to assist in implementing a comprehensive DDMP. The program focuses on the administration of the training modules as well as other distraction management strategies, with step-by-step instructions for implementation.
- A summary report of the research and development process that led to the creation of the DDMP is also available.

**The DDMP is available for free at:**

**English:** [tc.canada.ca/en/road-transportation/commercial-vehicles/driver-distraction-mitigation-program-commercial-vehicle-drivers](https://tc.canada.ca/en/road-transportation/commercial-vehicles/driver-distraction-mitigation-program-commercial-vehicle-drivers)

**French:** [tc.canada.ca/fr/transport-routier/vehicules-utilitaires/programme-attenuation-distraction-volant-conducteurs-vehicules-utilitaires](https://tc.canada.ca/fr/transport-routier/vehicules-utilitaires/programme-attenuation-distraction-volant-conducteurs-vehicules-utilitaires) ■

# CVSA's New Apparel and Accessories Store



Select your item, customize the size/fit and color, and have it shipped directly to your house.

## Goods and Accessories

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- Hats
- Flashlights
- Blankets
- Drinkware
- And More

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- T-Shirts
- Pullovers
- Jackets
- Dress Shirts
- Hoodies and Sweatshirts
- Vests and Outerwear

Available in a variety of colors in men's and women's cuts and sizes.



[cvsa.org/merch](https://cvsa.org/merch)

# Avoiding Confusion: The Requirements for Non-CDL CMV Drivers

By **Thomas Bray**, Sr. Industry Business Advisor, J.J. Keller & Associates

Over the years, there has been constant confusion about the requirements for non-commercial driver's license (non-CDL) commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers. With the changes in the proof of medical qualification regulations that CDL drivers are going through this summer, this is likely to get worse.

## What Is a Non-CDL CMV?

A non-CDL CMV is a vehicle that meets the definition of a CMV in § 390.5 but not the definition of a vehicle requiring a CDL found in § 383.5. This includes a vehicle that is used in interstate commerce and:

- Has an actual weight or weight rating of 10,001 pounds or more but does not meet the definition of a CDL-required CMV, or
- Seats between nine and 15 passengers (including the driver), and the company is being compensated for providing the transportation, and
- Does not require placards

## Roadside Inspections

During a roadside inspection, non-CDL and CDL-required drivers must produce all of the same credentials and documentation. For a non-CDL CMV driver, this includes:

- A valid license that covers the vehicle being operated (§ 391.11(b)(5)). Non-CDL licenses will be based on the licensing requirements in the state where the driver is licensed.
- A valid medical card. A non-CDL driver's medical information is not merged into their license (unlike a CDL driver's license), and the driver must present a valid medical card.
- Hours-of-service records of duty status (§ 395.8) or an explanation of what exemption is being used that allows the driver to operate without records of duty status in the vehicle (such as § 395.1(e)(2)). These drivers are also required to present any supporting documents that are in their possession unless they are using the applicable 150-air mile short-haul exemption (§ 395.1(e)(2) and § 395.11).
- Hazardous materials shipping papers and emergency response information if they are transporting any hazardous materials requiring these. (If the hazardous materials require placards, the driver must have a CDL.)
- Proof of a valid periodic (normally annual) inspection (§ 396.17).
- Vehicle credentials, including the vehicle registration and proof of insurance.



## The Change

The change that may cause additional confusion is that as of June 23, medical examiners are no longer required to provide a CDL driver with a copy of the medical card after a medical exam is passed. Getting the current medical information onto the driver's motor vehicle record (MVR) will be automated, making the physical card unnecessary. The process will involve the examiner uploading the exam results to the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners (NRCME) and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. They will then provide the information directly to the driver's licensing agency, and the agency will update the driver's MVR with the new medical certification information. With the driver being removed from the process, providing the driver with a medical card is unnecessary.

However, this change does NOT impact non-CDL CMV drivers. These drivers will still need to get a copy of the medical card from the medical examiner and carry it with them. This has always been required and should be business as usual for non-CDL-required drivers.

## Company (Carrier) Requirements

At the company level, full driver qualification (DQ) files will still be required for both CDL and non-CDL drivers (§ 391.51). The proof of medical qualification in the DQ file for a non-CDL driver will continue to be a copy of a current medical card. For a CDL, the driver will have a copy of an MVR showing the driver is medically qualified. What changes as of June 23 is:

- The carrier will no longer be required to verify the medical examiner is on the NRCME when a CDL driver does a medical exam. (See § 391.51(b)(8) – this will still be required when a non-CDL CMV driver does a medical exam.)
- The CDL driver providing a medical card as proof of being medically qualified and the carrier using it as proof of medical qualifications for up to 15 days after the exam will go away. The only proof that a CDL driver is medically qualified as of June 23 is the medical information on the driver's MVR (§ 391.51(b)(6)).

So, for non-CDL CMV drivers, there are no changes when it comes to proof of medical qualification. The proof of medical qualification for a non-CDL driver (on the road and in the DQ file) will continue to be a copy of a current medical card. ■

# Highlights from the Western Regional Commercial Vehicle Safety Summit

By **Dr. Brenda Lantz**, Associate Director, North Dakota State University, Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute



Technologies designed to promote safe driving behaviors and crash analysis tools for identifying high-risk corridors for deployment of crash-preventing countermeasures were the focus of the fourth Western Regional Commercial Vehicle Safety Summit, Dec. 4-5, 2024, in Denver, Colorado. More than 150 representatives from law enforcement, driver licensing agencies, universities and industry attended to share best practices, resources, research findings and partnerships.

The Summit was hosted by the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute (UGPTI) at North Dakota State University (NDSU) and co-hosted by the Colorado State Patrol. Funding was provided through a cooperative agreement with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). Summit topics were suggested by state law enforcement and driver licensing agencies and included the following:

- Priorities and challenges to improve commercial motor vehicle (CMV) safety (from federal, regional, state and industry perspectives)
- State-specific examples of best practices
- Resources and tools readily available to states and industry
- Information on current research and partnerships
- Agency and industry coordination efforts

- Updates on FMCSA research and grant opportunities
- Two roundtable discussions on state-specific issues and the main takeaways from the Summit

## Online Summit Resources

UGPTI's Commercial Vehicle Safety Center website includes all the presentations and Summit presenter biographies ([www.ugpti.org/outreach/cvsc](http://www.ugpti.org/outreach/cvsc)). The center serves as a point of contact for universities, law enforcement and driver licensing agencies seeking assistance to establish partnerships to improve CMV safety. It also hosts webinars and maintains a resources page with articles and reports on CMV safety. In addition, all the presenter biographies and presentations from previous events are accessible through the site.

## Key Takeaways from the 2024 Summit

Attendee comments regarding key takeaways from the summit included:

- The event was an excellent platform for discussing potential collaborations and building connections with professionals across various sectors.

*The event was an excellent platform for discussing potential collaborations and building connections.*

## 2025 Summit Dates:

**Southeast Commercial Vehicle Safety Research Summit**  
Aug. 26-27 | Tuscaloosa, Alabama

**Midwest Commercial Vehicle Safety Summit**  
Dec. 16-17 | Kansas City, Missouri

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- Learning the challenges from different states – some are similar in nature and can help in future collaborations to solve regional issues.
- Being collaborative will get us all further than working independently.
- Many different researchers are looking for ways to leverage data in a way that will reduce CMV crashes.
- While technology can help improve traffic safety, the effectiveness of these technologies relies heavily on CMV drivers' and other roadway users' acceptance of these technologies.
- You can change driver behaviors by changing the approach you take in relation to their belief system.

### Opening Session

The Colorado State Patrol Color Guard kicked off the opening session with the posting of the colors followed by the national anthem. Dr. Brenda Lantz, NDSU-UGPTI associate director, and Lt. Colonel Joshua Downing, Region 3 commander for the Colorado State Patrol, welcomed attendees. To provide background for the Summit, Tom Keane, FMCSA associate administrator for the Office of Research and Registration, reviewed CMV-involved crashes, injuries and accidents. Sue Lawless, the FMCSA executive director and chief safety officer, used her keynote address to outline goals and priorities for improving CMV safety.



The Colorado State Patrol Honor Guard posting the colors.

### Priorities and Challenges to Improve CMV Safety

During the first plenary session, attendees participated in a roundtable discussion of priorities and challenges to improving CMV safety. Attendees shared the priorities and challenges from their perspective within federal, regional and state agencies and within the CMV industry.

Capt. Brian Cocagne from the California Highway Patrol gave an overview of priorities and challenges from the state of California's perspective. Alex Leslie, a senior research associate with the American Transportation Research Institute, presented information on the Top Industry Issues report for 2024, and Scott Hernandez, the regional field administrator for the FMCSA Western Service Center, provided a regional perspective.

### Resources and Technologies

The next plenary session focused on resources and technologies. Lauren Rafferty, management and program analyst with the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, provided an overview and demonstration of the FMCSA Analysis & Information Crash Statistics Visualization Tool.

Gary Johnson, head of safety and compliance strategy for Motive, discussed using telematics, artificial intelligence and video to identify both high-risk and safe drivers, and Gina Mía Espinosa-Salcedo, regional administrator for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), presented information on NHTSA's recent Countermeasures That Work report and discussed partnership efforts between FMCSA and NHTSA.



The FMCSA A&I Crash Statistics Visualization Tool.

## State Best Practices

One of the summit's most popular sessions focused on sharing state best practices. In that session, Dan Cooke, administrator for the Licensing, Endorsements and Traffic Safety Program at the Washington State Department of Licensing, described the Washington Law and Justice Program that creates partnerships across multiple agencies to support courts and law enforcement. Capt. Joseph Romero of the New Mexico State Police gave a lively presentation on their high-crash-corridor effort based on integrated real-time data, and Dr. Denver Tolliver, NDSU-UGPTI director, provided an overview of a current study examining the prospects and challenges of autonomous trucking in North Dakota.

J.J. Rogers Lewis, program manager for the Transportation Research and Education for Driving Safety Center at the University of California San Diego, provided information on two current research projects examining the use of AI-supported cameras and targeted messaging in California to improve CMV safety.

## Research and Partnerships

The second day of the summit opened by highlighting research and partnerships. Eva Shipp, senior research scientist with the Texas A&M Transportation Institute, discussed data innovations to reduce high-risk driving for CMVs on rural Texas roadways and the Statewide CMV Profile Map they have developed. Lt. Luke Hendrickson, commander of Motor Carrier Operations with the North Dakota Highway Patrol, and Kimberly Vachal, program director of UGPTI's Rural Transportation Safety and Security Center, provided an entertaining and informative overview of their partnership on a project examining safe truck mobility for North Dakota winter roads. Alex Leslie, senior research associate with the American Transportation Research Institute, discussed a research project focused on issues and opportunities with driver-facing cameras (see page 46).



Texas Statewide CMV Profile Map.

## State and Industry Coordination Efforts

In a session focused on coordination efforts, Casey Matlock, motor carrier manager for the California Highway Patrol, discussed the California Commercial Vehicle Safety Summit and Industry Day events. Kari Finley, director and research scholar with the Center for Health and Safety Culture at Montana State University, provided an overview of the Traffic Safety Culture Pooled Fund study, a national research consortium focused on creating tools to positively promote and change the culture. Finley also presented information on growing positive traffic safety culture by changing beliefs to support safer behaviors, and she provided Montana's resources for reducing risky driving behaviors. The session concluded with Bill Bland, managing partner for Medidas Technologies, highlighting an innovative approach they have developed to shift driver behavior.

## FMCSA Research, Technology and CDL Updates

The final plenary session of the summit focused on FMCSA updates and included a discussion from Tom Kelly, senior transportation specialist with the FMCSA Advanced Technology Division, on current research in roadside and onboard technology solutions, including advanced driver-assistance systems, autonomous vehicles and Level VIII inspections. Updates and hot topics related to commercial driver's licenses (CDL) were covered by Nikki McDavid, chief of the FMCSA CDL Division, who discussed the Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse and the Safe Driver Apprenticeship Pilot Program. Kelly Stowe, general engineer with the FMCSA Applied Research Division, provided an overview of new entrant training and testing research. Dan Meyer, transportation specialist with FMCSA Crash Data Analytics, discussed the Crash Causal Factors Program. Each presenter also provided information regarding FMCSA grant opportunities.

## Roundtable Discussion of State Topics

The summit wrapped up with a final roundtable discussion of any topics that had not yet been covered, including successful hiring practices, CDL training for clerks of court, a modernized credentialing and registration system, and a CMV-involved crashes reference booklet. ■



NHTSA's Countermeasures That Work.



Resources to reduce risky driving.

## Keeping Highways Safer for Trucks and Other Motorists During Winter Storms

By **Tom Jirik**, Communications Coordinator, Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute; **Kimberly Vachal**, Director of Rural Transportation Safety and Security Center, Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute; **Lt. Luke Hendrickson**, Commander of Motor Carrier Operations, North Dakota Highway Patrol

A closer look at truck crashes during severe winter weather in North Dakota is yielding clues on how to reduce risks and travel disruptions on the state's interstate highways. The research was conducted by researchers at the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute (UGPTI) at North Dakota State University.

"We looked at preparations and policies governing truck safety during winter weather, including government regulations, industry standards and best practices to prevent weather-related truck crashes," said researcher Kimberly Vachal. "Our goal was to provide evidence-based recommendations for enhancing strategies to prevent truck crashes during winter storm events."

Vachal, director of UGPTI's Rural Transportation Safety and Security Center, noted that commercial motor vehicle (CMV) crashes can become particularly disruptive with jackknifed or overturned trailers blocking travel lanes and disrupting winter weather maintenance and travel recovery activities. Researchers analyzed 594 truck-involved crashes among 2,104 crashes during the winter months from 2019 to 2024. They conducted case studies of crashes to learn the sequence and nature of truck-involved crashes during a severe winter storm that involved an interstate highway closure. They also gathered information from surrounding states on winter road management processes, enforcement practices, road closure decisions, education programs and communication practices.

Along with Vachal, the UGPTI research team included statistician Yun Zhou, bridge and pavement engineer Kelly Bengtson, researchers Del Peterson and Kshitij Sharma, and sociologist Andrew Kubas. In incorporating the research team's broad areas of expertise, the study used a Safe Systems approach that factored in engineering, enforcement, education and emergency response.

"We take all of that into account when we try to get our crash rates down and fatalities to zero," said Lt. Luke Hendrickson, commander of Motor Carrier Operations for the North Dakota Highway Patrol (NDHP).

The UGPTI research team worked closely with NDHP to identify objectives and focus the study on critical crash causes and decisions made by CMV drivers, North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) staff and NDHP personnel during winter storms. The study focused on I-94. Lt. Hendrickson noted the corridor carries 70% of North Dakota's interstate traffic, with more than 300 million truck miles each year and about 25% of all vehicles traveling in the state. With only 100 troopers available statewide to respond to events on a daily basis, Lt. Hendrickson said they are constantly working to balance mobility and safety on the state's highways.

Vachal and Lt. Hendrickson recently presented results of the study at the Western Regional Commercial Vehicle Safety Summit organized by UGPTI in Denver, Colorado.

Lt. Hendrickson told participants, "We're going to be able to use this crash study for the I-94 corridor and in other areas of the state as well to close down highways and respond to events. We want to use this study to show us how to use our tools to be more efficient."

Lt. Hendrickson added that drivers often feel like they can drive in poor conditions even when troopers can't see the end of their squad cars. "We have to look at how we make decisions that will be more impactful for the people that can't make the good decisions for themselves," he said.

Study findings included:

- 84% of CMV crashes during the study period were influenced by wind coupled with the presence of ice and low visibility.
- 40% of CMV crashes involved a jackknifed semi.
- Nearly 100% of crashes involved out-of-state CMV drivers.
- Nearly two-thirds of CMV crashes were single-vehicle crashes. When a second vehicle was involved, it was often a secondary crash.
- A lack of adequate truck parking results in trucks parking on exit ramps or shoulders with no essential services, which can slow recovery due to limited towing capacity and the buildup of large drifts.

As a result of the study, NDHP is examining several strategies to reduce winter crash risks and improve after-storm recovery.



A crane assists with CMV crash clean-up.

- Develop education efforts focused on out-of-state drivers to be delivered at entry points into the state. Winter driver training courses may also be developed. NDHP has already developed three short videos related to winter driving to educate out-of-state truckers.
- Review enforcement efforts. Of the 1,152 citations issued on I-94 during the study period, 38% were issued to truck drivers involved in crash events. “Not every crash event deserves a citation, but it is a way to educate the driver,” Lt. Hendrickson said.
- Consult with NDDOT regarding placement of cable barriers in medians. “In some areas of the interstate system, the barriers are extremely close to the shoulder of the road,” Lt. Hendrickson said. “In the past, where a semi might have been able to enter the median and stop, the power unit is now being stopped more quickly, resulting in the trailer swinging around in a jackknife. Can we move those barriers without compromising safety?”
- Negotiate with Google Maps and other companies that offer mapping apps. Currently, when interstates are closed, map apps may route traffic to other state and county highways, resulting in stuck trucks and blocked roads. Currently, in South Dakota, when an interstate or other highway is closed, all other roads in the area are marked as closed by the mapping apps as well.
- Improve communication of truck parking options to provide safe havens for trucks during storms. “Parking is a huge problem for us,” Lt. Hendrickson said. “We don’t want trucks to stop in the middle of nowhere,

where they get stuck and start freezing and cause huge snowdrifts.”

- Implement reduced speed zones where wind, blowing snow and ice are particularly troublesome.
- Close certain roads during high winds. This strategy is used to reduce risks to CMVs in Wyoming.
- Improve planning related to smaller weather events. “We’ll have a traffic watch center paired with a department of emergency services, NDDOT and NDHP,” Lt. Hendrickson said. “With data from this study, we’ll be able to say, based on what’s happened before, this is what we should do to reduce impacts this time around to have a more efficient response and prevent crashes.”
- Increase fines for ignoring winter road closures. The fines act as a deterrent and can provide some relief for the financial burden on emergency services.
- Make road maintenance adjustments to include improved snow and ice removal techniques, pre-treatment strategies, and implementation of new technologies that could reduce crash risk.
- Implement road design changes such as greater separation of the road from the surrounding area to allow snow to blow off the road. Deeper ditches, wider rights-of-way, living snow fences, snow fences and even darker-colored pavement can reduce problems with snow and ice buildup.
- Employ intelligent transportation systems such as variable message signs, roadside weather stations and variable speed limits to help improve safety during adverse weather.

“Our goal is to reduce fatalities to zero,” Lt. Hendrickson said. “Beyond that, we’re looking at how long it takes traffic flow to recover from a crash. If we have a semi in the ditch and a couple of cars crash, we’re out there investigating. Then, other emergency services come to take care of the victims, and tow companies come to remove the vehicle. Next, NDDOT arrives to clear off the highway. In the study, we found that it takes more than six hours for traffic speeds to recover to 90%. That’s a long time. It affects commerce, flow – and most of all – safety.”

Lt. Hendrickson added, “If we can get ahead of these storm events and perhaps keep vehicles off the road, it will keep commerce moving a little bit more smoothly, and we won’t have these big gaps in service and traffic. And, ultimately, it will keep the highways safer.” ■



Lt. Luke Hendrickson presents at the Commercial Vehicle Safety Summit in Denver, Colorado, in December 2024.



A semi-truck stuck on the highway median in North Dakota. Photo credit: NDDOT.



Kim Vachal presents at the Commercial Vehicle Safety Summit in Denver, Colorado, in December 2024.

# The Role of Vehicle Occupant Detection in CMV Safety and Vision Zero Initiatives

By **Jim Rhodes**, Director of Commercial Vehicle Operations, Perceptics

Despite significant vehicle and roadway safety advancements over the years, progress in reducing the overall roadway fatality rate has stalled over the past decade. Data from the U.S. Department of Transportation indicates that traffic-related fatalities have exceeded 40,000 in the past three years. In 2022, 5,837 large trucks were involved in fatal crashes – an increase of 49% in the last 10 years, according to the National Safety Council.

These numbers reflect the uphill battle that Vision Zero initiatives face nationwide, aiming to eliminate all traffic deaths. To achieve this ambitious goal, transportation agencies must prioritize adapting infrastructure and adopting tools to change driver behavior. Emerging technologies like vehicle occupant detection (VOD) systems can enhance the safety of commercial motor vehicles (CMV) and reduce crash risks.

## How VOD Technology Enhances CMV Safety

VOD technology utilizes high-resolution imaging with filtered lenses and AI-powered analytics to capture clear images through windshields and determine driver behavior inside a vehicle. Originally developed for occupant counting, transportation agencies can now leverage these systems to improve driver safety with automated identification of distracted driving and unsafe driving behaviors. Here's how:

### Distracted and Unsafe Driving Detection

Distracted driving can involve anything from texting to eating behind the wheel. A study by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration found that drivers of heavy vehicles or trucks are over 23 times more likely to experience a safety-critical event when texting than when driving non-distracted. This study led to a texting ban for all CMV drivers, regardless of state laws. VOD systems can detect behaviors like cell phone usage and more. By integrating with roadside monitoring infrastructure, these systems provide an unbiased and efficient method to identify and mitigate this behavior.

### Seatbelt Compliance Monitoring

Studies show that seatbelt use significantly reduces fatalities and severe injuries in CMV crashes. VOD technology can help identify when a CMV driver is not wearing a seatbelt, allowing transportation officials to intervene before the consequences are deadly.

### Driver Restriction Verification

CMV drivers must adhere to certain restrictions to ensure their own safety and that of all drivers on the road. Drive time limits are in place to help limit driver fatigue, which has consequences as deadly as distracted driving. Timestamped images from VOD systems can enable the enforcement of drive time limits. They can also allow verification of other driver-related elements like eyeglass usage and the number of people in the cab.

## Advantages of Roadside Driver Safety Detection vs. In-Cab Monitoring

While in-cab monitoring systems provide valuable insights, they often raise concerns about driver privacy, require company-level buy-in and are costly to implement. Roadside VOD systems offer a more scalable alternative. They provide data that enables government agencies to monitor safety trends across all CMVs rather than only those equipped with in-cab solutions. Additionally, roadside detection offers consistent, unbiased monitoring of seatbelt use and distraction because it does not require employer buy-in or enforcement.

## A Future of Safer Roads with Vision Zero

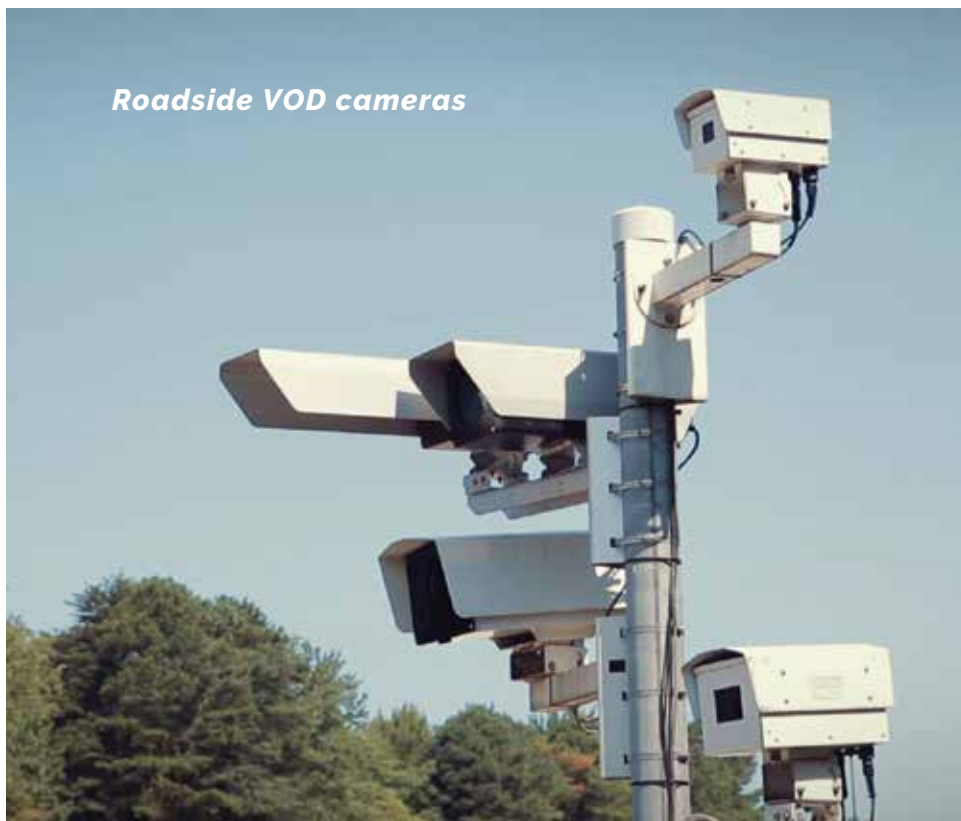
Using VOD systems purely for enforcement will never successfully aid Vision Zero initiatives. It will only foster resentment amongst fleet operators and drivers. Instead, VOD systems act as an element of broader educational programs that aim to drive long-term improvements in driver habits.

Government agencies can leverage anonymized data from roadside VOD systems to assess CMV safety trends and inform infrastructure planning. Identifying high-volume areas for distracted driving or non-compliance allows for proactive interventions. Additional signage, targeted safety campaigns or changes to roadway design can be implemented to mitigate risks.

For Vision Zero to become a reality, technology must work in tandem with policy and public awareness. VOD systems offer a proactive approach to common CMV safety issues by detecting and deterring risks before they result in safety-critical incidents.

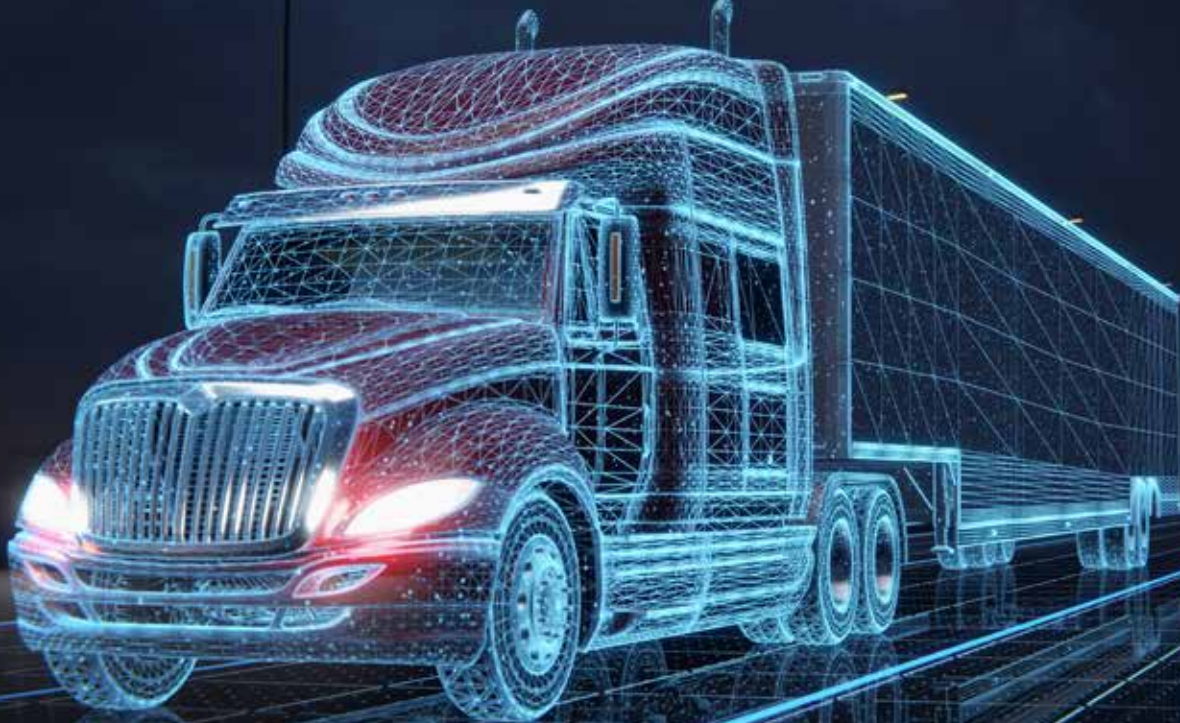
The road to zero fatalities is long, but with real-time monitoring, proactive intervention, and actionable data, VOD technology can improve roadways and save lives. ■

Roadside VOD cameras



# Having Productive Discussions on Safety Management Technologies

By **Dave Elniski**, PhD Student, CTSP, CRSP, ATCL, Industry Advisor, Safety and Compliance, Alberta Motor Transport Association



Safety technology is super cool. I don't think I'm alone in feeling this way, and we don't have to dig too deeply into the news to find headlines related to vehicle safety technology, especially those related to autonomous vehicles. Is safety technology worth getting excited about, though, or is it just that sort of thing that is captivating and, as a result, likely to generate more discussion and interest than it deserves?

Like most things in safety management, this question is too high-level to really be of much value. Of course, safety technology is worth discussing and worthy of a great deal of interest! Not only is high-tech stuff cool to many just because it's high tech, but safety professionals and motor carriers should strive to cultivate a reasonable degree of ongoing curiosity in safety innovations, whether methodological or technological. It's good professional practice to devote some time on a regular basis to keeping up with industry developments.

What I'm really getting at, though, is our conversations about safety technology. "Safety technology," first of all, is a very broad term. It includes all technologies regardless of their efficacy. Second, while mainstream headlines can help us keep our thumb on the pulse of industry trends, they're not meant to be the primary means by which industry professionals stay current. We need to be more specific in order to have conversations that are impactful from a fleet

safety management perspective. Otherwise, the discourse around safety technology will remain too high-level to be of practical value.

What I can say with great confidence is that fleet safety technology and associated safety management practices are definitely worth watching and evaluating. In my role with the Alberta Motor Transport Association (AMTA), I've been researching this topic to help motor carriers understand the language around vehicle and workplace safety management. (Hint: it's complex and not really all that standardized and consistent.) This research also helps interpret data on the efficacy and financial implications of investing in such safety interventions. As we better position ourselves to offer guidance to motor carriers in this space, I can say right now that this aspect of safety management is very promising for motor carriers of virtually all sizes and types of operations.

However, it's not an easy topic to address. Motor carriers are complex, and many struggle with managing regulatory compliance, let alone successfully implementing safety technology into their operations to improve the proactive dimension of their safety management efforts. Plus, let's not forget how fast technology and the best practices around its use tend to change.

We absolutely should get excited about safety technology. Passion is a great thing in safety management. But we're also at a moment

when fleet safety professionals and the motor carriers they support need to be strategic and systematic in how they self-educate on this topic. There's nothing wrong with skimming mainstream media headlines and consuming articles like this one that discuss the topic. However, we also must develop a deeper understanding of specific types of safety technologies, consider where they may and may not fit in a motor carrier's safety management system, and have a reasonable degree of skill in understanding data related to their effectiveness at improving safety performance if we want to see benefits at the motor carrier level.

Fortunately, there's a lot of help out there, so no one and no motor carriers are alone in trying to figure out the best relationship between safety tech innovation and day-to-day operations. Organizations like AMTA and CVSA are more critical than ever in creating communities where safety thoughts and ideas are shared, and research groups, governments and professional networks are increasingly valuable in navigating these types of complicated topics.

So, feel free to reach out! Let's chat about what's going on in safety management. We're stronger when we share. ■

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