

Statement by the Ontario Trucking Association



Improving the Future of Truck Safety

By belonging to the Ontario Trucking Association (OTA), a trucking company has chosen to play a leadership role in the industry. Member carriers are among the premier carriers in North America. These fleets aspire to set industry standards and develop an effective, efficient, equitable and fair regulatory environment by taking informed, responsible positions and proactively engaging with policy makers and legislators. Considering recent events, the OTA Board of Directors is once again exhibiting that leadership.

The OTA Board Directors wants to assure the public that truck safety is the top priority of most fleet owners, managers, dispatchers, and professional drivers in Ontario. The trucking industry shares its workplace with the motoring public and an error by one of our professional drivers can have tragic results for other road users and surrounding communities.

The OTA membership realizes this responsibility, which is evidenced by the fact that since 1995 we have seen truck registrations increase in the province by 75 percent while commercial motor vehicle collisions have decreased by almost 70 percent over the same time. Furthermore, when a truck driver is involved in a collision, it's determined the truck driver was driving properly close to 70 per cent of the time. Although the data indicates that truck drivers are at fault fewer times than others, we recognize that we are professionals and we have a responsibility to get better still.

OTA believes the key to improving truck safety is mitigating human factors contributing to collisions by using enhanced enforcement, vehicle standards, training, education, and road improvements. There are about 200,000 Ontario professional truck drivers working in our industry. But like any human beings, performing any function in the workplace, they can make mistakes. To help minimize the potential for human error while supporting truck drivers in their demanding profession, and to deal with critical road safety issues like inattentive or aggressive driving, OTA has endorsed the following action plan.

The Ontario Trucking Association and our member companies are committed to working with our key government road safety partners --- the Ontario Provincial Police, The Ontario Ministry of Transportation and Transport Canada to implement this plan. The first meeting of the OTA-OPP-MTO working group will commence this month. OTA looks forward to discussing these action items with our road safety partners.

OTA Action Plan

Enforcement

1. OTA will work with the enforcement community to enforce the current laws and promote on-road enforcement campaigns targeting sectors of our industry that do not comply with road safety rules and regulations.
2. In a collaborative effort, OTA will work with the enforcement community to build tiered relationships between the OTA, the OPP, MTO, and other enforcement agencies in order to develop, communicate and enforce policies and programs related to the overall safety and well-being for all drivers, pedestrians and cyclists sharing the road.
3. With the July 1, 2018 legalization of marijuana, the OTA is calling on the Province of Ontario to introduce mandatory drug and alcohol testing for commercial truck drivers.
4. The OTA supports a zero-tolerance roadside testing program for the presence of drugs and alcohol in all truck drivers, regardless of medical clearance to use marijuana for health reasons.

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Enhanced Vehicle Standards

1. OTA will provide leadership to encourage the adoption of new and proven advanced technologies like driver assistance systems (ADAS) that will help curb aggressive/distracted driving, while supporting truck drivers in their demanding professional tasks. OTA will explore the creation of a pilot project or study with the Government of Ontario and Transport Canada which could serve two purposes: (i) capturing evaluation data on the benefits and impediments of this technology (ii) help develop appropriate standards for federal vehicle safety features for large trucks. This study and recommendations could be concluded by the end of 2018;
2. If there are proven safety benefits and no technological barriers associated with the adoption of technologies like lane departure systems, forward collision warning, automatic emergency braking systems, and onboard safety monitoring devices, OTA would endorse mandating these technologies in all new commercial vehicles beginning in 2019.

Infrastructure Improvement

1. The Ontario trucking industry pays close to \$2.6 billion dollars in provincial fuel taxes, registration fees and carbon taxes. An additional \$300 million is paid to the federal government in federal excise taxes on diesel.
2. Stop and go traffic and congestion create several issues for Ontario drivers, including a negative impact on road safety and the economy. OTA will continue to work with the Ontario Ministry of Transportation to ensure investment in our highways targets critical areas of congestion.
3. Construction zone safety has been identified as an issue of concern by OTA members. OTA will be working with the OPP and MTO to make construction zones safer for all road users and the construction industry.

Training

1. OTA will work with MTO to review Mandatory Entry Level Training for commercial drivers to include distraction-related education and training features.
2. OTA will work with MTO to improve training and awareness for passenger car drivers on how to share the road with trucks.

Education: Industry Best Practices

1. The OTA Board of Directors has endorsed the development of a working partnership with the Canadian Coalition on Distracted Driving, led by the Traffic Injury Research Foundation, to create a standard package of information and educational resources for member companies.
2. OTA, working with the Canadian Coalition on Distracted Driving, will undergo the development and implementation of practical workplace policies, and create a business case to encourage companies to implement distracted/aggressive driving policies, which will be built on the experiences learned in the trucking industry. Included in this business case would be a standardized enforcement strategy aimed at drivers who continue to drive aggressively/distracted.
3. Trucking is a demand-derived business. As such OTA will educate our members' customers that, to keep highways safe, they must trust their goods to carriers who invest in the best fleet management, safety, and technology practices. OTA will be asking shippers to not just examine the cost of moving their goods but also commit to carriers who can prove they utilize the following best practices:

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- (a) Utilize extensive pre-employment screening processes and conduct ongoing driver training;
- (b) Utilize a documented training program that supports skills and education development in driving, hazard recognition and distraction avoidance
- (c) Ensure owner-operators and company drivers are properly classified for tax and workplace health and safety requirements;
- (d) Utilize electronic logging devices instead of paper log books;
- (e) Install collision mitigation systems in all newly-purchased Class 8 trucks
- (f) Ensure carriers are using environmentally compliant tractors;
- (g) Ensure their carriers have liability insurance coverage that is significantly higher than the minimum requirement to sufficiently cover the costs associated with injuries, fatalities and loss of property in heavy truck collisions.