

# Truck Crash Profile:

## The National Picture 1997

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**For more information:**

Information on truck crashes and the nature and results of Office of Motor Carriers safety programs is available from the Office of Motor Carrier Information Analysis, Analysis Division (HIA-20), 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590.

Questions about this profile and the availability of other reports on OMC crash data should be directed to Ralph Craft, Analysis Division staff, at (202) 366-0324, or Scott Valentine at (202) 366-6236. The general number for the Analysis Division is (202) 366-1861. Send FAX messages to (202) 366-8842.

## *Executive Summary*

- In 1997 there were 4,871 large trucks involved in **fatal** crashes. There were also an estimated 97,000 large trucks involved in **injury** crashes, and 342,000 involved in **property-damage-only** crashes.
- Large trucks in 1997 accounted for 9 percent of the vehicles involved in **fatal** crashes, 2 percent of those involved in **injury** crashes, and 4 percent of the vehicles involved in **property-damage-only** crashes.
- Sixty-three percent of the trucks involved in 1997 **fatal** crashes, and about 50 percent of those involved in **non-fatal** crashes were tractors pulling single semi-trailers. Four percent of the trucks involved in **fatal** crashes were doubles, and 0.3 percent were triples. Less than 5 percent of the trucks involved in **fatal** and **non-fatal** crashes were transporting hazardous materials.
- The crash rate (number of crash-involved vehicles per 100 million vehicle miles traveled) for large trucks in **fatal** crashes is slightly higher than the rate for passenger vehicles. The crash rate for passenger vehicles involved in **injury** crashes, however, is more than three times the rate for large trucks.
- In two-vehicle **fatal** crashes between a large truck and a passenger vehicle in 1997, 7 percent of the truck drivers were under 26 years old, and only 2 percent of the truck drivers were over 65. By contrast 24 percent of the passenger vehicle drivers in these crashes were under 26 years old, and 20 percent were over 65.
- In two-vehicle **fatal** crashes between a large truck and a passenger vehicle, less than 1 percent of the truck drivers had a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.10 grams per deciliter or greater, the level for intoxication in most States. By contrast 15 percent of passenger vehicle drivers in these **fatal** crashes with a truck had a BAC level of 0.10 or greater.
- Driver-related crash factors were coded for 28 percent of truck drivers involved in a **fatal** crash with a single passenger vehicle. However, driver-related crash factors were coded for 80 percent of the passenger vehicle drivers involved in these crashes.
- A large majority of 1997 **fatal** and **non-fatal** truck crashes occurred in good weather, on dry road surfaces, during the day, and on weekdays.
- The first harmful event in 78 percent of **fatal** large truck crashes was the collision of the truck with another moving vehicle. More than half of the first crash events for trucks involved in **non-fatal** crashes were collisions with another vehicle in transport.

- **None of the available data addresses crash causation or fault. Thus, the data can only be suggestive as to the reasons for truck crashes.**