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Sent: Friday, 21 August 2015 5:22 PM

To: Daniel Craven

Subject: fatigue research on heavy rig drivers

Hello. I get regular emails from you but I can't log in. So I am submitting this by email.

Views sought on a new framework for fatigue research

21 August 2015

I would like to comment on fatigue standards for heavy truck drivers. I worked in the chemical industry for 25 years, liaising with truck drivers and learning some of their problems.

1. Many drivers, esp. independent drivers, are put under undue pressures to deliver product thousands of kilometers away and do this in hours, or just 1 or 2 days. Clients of independent drivers will call the drivers partway into their trip to inform the driver that the time of delivery has shortened and the driver needs to get there sooner. This leads to drivers having to exceed their allotted hours of driving, or speeding above speed limits, to arrive at their destination in the "new" time. This factor never gets mentioned as contributing to truck accidents. But I am sure it is one of the top 3 causes of truck accidents. It is easy to issue these orders to drivers now because of the presence of mobile phones. Back in the 90s you couldn't get a job from Melbourne to Brisbane unless you could do the delivery in 17 hours.
2. Heavy rigs require lots of work to keep driving down the road, producing lots of fatigue. There is also the issue of clover car drivers who think rigs can stop on a dime, and who think nothing of cutting off truckies and forcing them to use their brakes in a dangerous way.
3. Long hours at the wheel lead to poor diets, which cause overweight drivers who are unhealthy and fatigue more easily than car drivers.
4. Long hours waiting at terminals to load up the rigs mean drivers get spotty sleep periods that lead to more fatigue. The waiting time for the drivers is unpaid time. I have heard of truckies waiting up to 6 hours in a queue to load up. You can't leave the queue to go off somewhere to eat or sleep so the driver is confined to his rig, which may not have sleep or food facilities. The driver has to stay awake the whole time lest he lose his place in the line.
5. Police harassment is also a big issue. I have heard from Shepparton residents who drive rigs that the local cops head up north on the Hume to harass the truck drivers at night. The drivers slow down to avoid the cops but then take longer to get to their destination. This is a big fatigue factor. Cruise controls do not lessen fatigue, they lead to another distraction. Few rigs have cruises anyway.
6. I met a truckie a few years ago who made 2 round trips between Perth and Melbourne each week. It took me 5 days to relocate a campervan from Melbourne to Perth. This truckie regularly drove at speeds in excess of 140 kph. And yes, his rig could do that speed.
7. Drivers must be paid by the hour, not by load and time.

8. CEOs and their unrealistic profit expectations are a huge part in the problems of heavy rig drivers. This is where the legislation must be aimed at. To stop CEOs from sabotaging fair pay for drivers, and fair and realistic delivery times for drivers.
9. Drivers waiting in long queues at terminals must be compensated for their time, and the cost factored into the final costings.

Sincerely

Joseph Allen