

OPP using innovative approach to get distracted truck drivers

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) kicked off Operation Safe Trucking Monday, a province-wide commercial motor vehicle (CMV) enforcement blitz that is taking an innovative approach to targeting distracted transport truck drivers.

During the initiative, OPP officers will conduct patrols in truck tractors (transport trucks), giving them a better vantage point for spotting CMV drivers who are distracted or engaged in other dangerous behaviours behind the wheel.

The trucks are being used for the first time during Operation Safe Trucking, the latest OPP enforcement initiative to support the OPP CMV Mitigation Strategy. The strategy aims to reduce the number of CMV collisions on OPP-patrolled roads.

During the five-day blitz, OPP officers are targeting CMV moving violations, such as distracted, aggressive and impaired driving, speeding, following too close, occupant restraint and hours of service violations. CMVs found with mechanical, load security or other safety issues will be subject to inspections and enforcement actions in collaboration with the Ministry of Transportation.

While the focus of the initiative is on transport trucks, officers will also be addressing dangerous behaviours on the part of all drivers.

Every year, collisions that involve commercial motor vehicles are in the thousands and they result in significant loss of life, OPP Commissioner Vince Hawkes said. So far this year, the OPP has responded to more than 6,200 transport truck-related collisions, with 87 people dying in 72 of those crashes. Adding truck tractors to our list of enforcement tools will enhance our officers' observation and investigative skills during Operation Safe Trucking and future initiatives that focus on Commercial Motor Vehicle safety.

Road safety is a priority for the province, and that is why Operation Safe Trucking is so important, Community Safety and Correctional Services Minister Marie-France Lalonde observed. It will enhance OPP efforts to catch drivers violating the law and help prevent dangerous behaviour in the future. Safe driving is a shared responsibility.

Driver inattention leads the list of primary causes in CMV-involved collisions, with close to 27 per cent of the crashes being attributed to this driving behaviour, according to OPP.